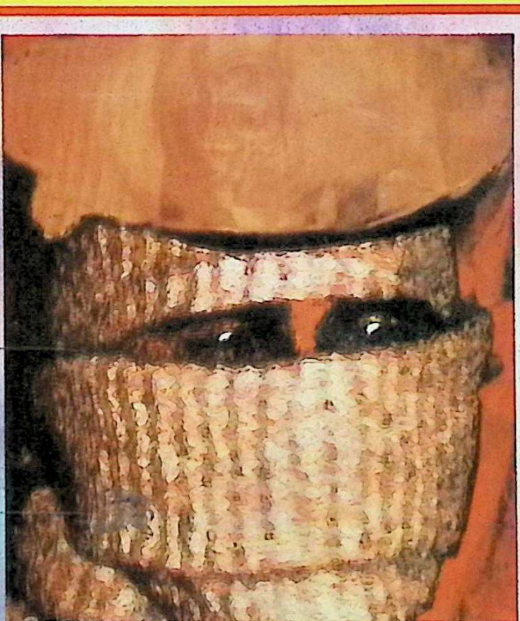
Kashmir Diary

Psychology of Militancy



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Major General Arjun Ray

Foreword by: K.P. S. Gill

Kashmir Diary

Major General Arjun R

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An Indian General's inside view of the psychological dimensions of Kashmiri militancy.

Modernday warfare has information as its most potential weapon, for the target is more the mind of the enemy and not necessary physical, particularly when faced with situation resulting from militancy or political alienation. As wars between nation states are becoming less likely and we are witnessing a phenomenal rise in empowerment of the individual, the primary threat to nation states is from within.

Arjun Ray's book takes a wide-angled view of the theory of political violence and then relates it to Kashmir. *Part 1* addresses the psychodynamics of a militant's inner mind and concludes that militants are not mentally sick. *Part* 2 focuses on the framework of National Information and Media Policy to fight Pakistan's info-Islamic war. The author's suggestion for being proactive in information handling and winning complete confidence of the media, breaks fresh ground. *Part 3* studies soldier's mind incisively, understanding his strength and the regimental system.

Elections in Kashmir in 1996 have come as a surprise for Pakistan, as well as for the militants and a host of sceptics in India. Now comes the psychological Catch-22 syndrome. That a popular government in Kashmir has been sworn in does not in any way suggest that militancy is over - far from it. Elections have only magnified the psychological inconsistencies in target audiences and the contradictions in tormented minds of those affected. Every violent struggle has its moments of order. Whether it is a blip of hope for Kashmir, only time will tell. But there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

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EXTRAORDINARY ACCLAIM FOR

MAJOR GENERAL ARJUN RAY'S

KASHMIR DIARY: Psychology of Militancy

"In the type of operations **Major General Arjun Ray** has so well written about, the media is a major factor in psychological operations. It is also a matter of historical record that government forces.... have generally not succeeded in winning the media war. That has been the fate of government forces in almost all low intensity situations. Therefore, as **Arjun Ray** very rightly stresses, this is an area where we have got to ensure that this very important force multiplier is utilised in the manner to give in the best advantage.... These type of books will add to our institutional memory. This book is excellently well written and I hope.....will get the wide readership it deserves."

— General Shankar Roychowdhury,
Chief of Army Staff,

"He has turned the searchlights inwards."

General K. Sunderji,
Ex Chief of Army Staff

"**Major General Ray's** book on insurgency in Kashmir should become a text book.... **Major General Ray** documents that in India, even on Kashmir, there is no bottom line. I sincerely appeal to our journalists and the professors of our schools of journalism to read this book thoroughly and see how unwittingly we play the terrorist's game and thereby unsteady the hand which alone can defend us."

—Arun Shourie

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"**Major General Arjun Ray** is what in army parlance, is called a 'thinking soldier', and in his book, perhaps the first by a serving officer, trudges a thin line between classified information and subtle dissent. 'You have to read between the lines'".

—Harinder Baweja, *India Today*

"This book is different from others: first, for providing a unique insight into the mental make-up and motivation of the Kashmiri militant; and second, for its equally penetrating view of media coverage of the insurgency, of the news-war behind the war, and what happens when the dynamics of conventional warfare are overtaken by an information war."

—Sunil Sethi, *Times of India*

"The unique nature of the book lies, however, in its insight into the mind of the militants.... The larger question that emerges from the publication of the book is whether serving soldiers should be allowed to candidly express their views on such issues. The answer is strongly in the affirmative.... The first account by a military officer about an active conflict....an unusual study on the militants, the media and the military."

—Maroof Raza, *Outlook*

"**Major General Ray** has drawn attention to the four core issues; that the people of Kashmir are the centre of gravity, not the militants; low intensity conflict encompasses a three-dimensional thrust - the government, the people and the security forces; in militancy who is right and who is wrong is irrelevant and ultimately what matters is how the people perceive something to be right or wrong."

—*Indian Express*

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पुस्तकालय
181461
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

Major General Arjun Ray, VSM

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To

The Indian Army's Young Officers and Jawans
Who continue to bear the brunt of all wars,
To Whom the Nation owes a great debt

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Foreword

An outright victory over the terrorists in the Punjab, an election in Kashmir, a new regime in Pakistan with a mandate for improved bilateral relations, and there is a temptation to believe [despite troublesome reports from the North-East] that the era of militant conflict is a thing of the past in India. The futility of terrorist movements appears to have been demonstrated, if not comprehensively, at least sufficiently to discourage future adventurism in this direction.

A closer evaluation of the facts, unfortunately, does not justify such optimism. And there are, among a host of lesser reasons, three that make the evolution of a comprehensive, coherent and internally consistent long-term strategy against terrorism a necessity for India.

The first of these relates to the country's unique position in the emerging geopolitical order. Dramatic changes in the international political architecture of the region have made the Indian subcontinent one of the most volatile regions of the world. The most obvious and consequential of these is, of course, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and with it, the destabilization of cold war equations. The result is a 'rethinking' by the US on its countervailing military presence and the haphazard emergence of a new set of American 'strategic interests' that have come into play in the region. American policy, displaying a marked hawkishness combined with a remarkable ignorance of regional realities, has tended to exacerbate tensions between India and Pakistan, and has contributed enormously to destabilization in Afghanistan as well.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union, furthermore, has tended to compound influences emerging from the religious ferment and ethnic entanglements of Muslim Central Asia; and from the territorial and other quarrels in the neighbouring Middle-East that are playing out against a backdrop of rising Islamic fundamentalism. A devastated and destabilized Afghanistan is a source of great present and potential anxiety in both India and Pakistan. And sporadic support, both moral and material, from the West, particularly the US, as well as from hostile neighbours, to various brands of subnationalism in South Asia, has added strength to the rash of terrorist movements and insurgencies that plague the region.

China's hegemonistic predilections, moreover, are an ever-present threat to South Asia. China's increasing belligerence in South East Asia, covert support to insurgencies, particularly in India's North East, the backdrop of the 1962 War against India and the continued occupation of, and oppression in Tibet, and a systematically mischievous policy of arms sales and sensitive technology transfer give adequate grounds for concern to the countries of the subcontinent - though some of them may temporarily benefit from some of these policies.

The second reason relates to fundamental changes that have taken place in the very nature of conflict between nations. Strategic configurations are no longer expressed in the traditional nomenclature of 'external security threats'. While the nations of this region do have impressive conventional military capabilities arrayed against each other, and against their other neighbours, it is a fact that the danger of open warfare between nations has certainly diminished. The ambitions, both of regional and extra-regional powers are now translated into a range of 'non-standard', 'irregular' wars that prey on domestic discontent to secure transnational territorial and strategic objectives.

Terrorism is at the very heart of this new paradigm of international conflict. It is, moreover, an increasingly popular ideology of conflict within nations, as discontented factions, disappointed with the attainments and impatient with processes of democracy, obtain freer access to large arsenals of sophisticated small arms and explosives, as well as to the skills to use them, and the organizational techniques for their deployment. Indeed, the power, the weaponary, and the proficiency of terrorist groups appears to be accelerating at a rate much faster than the countermeasures available to civilized society.

The combined impact of these international and internal factors is the veritable rash of terrorist movements and separatist insurgencies that has swept across South Asia in the recent past, the most prominent of which are Sikh and Kashmiri separatism in India, and the persistent insurgencies in its North Eastern States; Sindhi, Mohajir and Baluchi movements in Pakistan; and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Gorkha question in Bhutan, the conflict between the Terai and Hill People in Nepal, and the Chakmas in Bangladesh are among the more obvious of the numerous other areas of potential strife within the subcontinent that could spawn terrorist movements in the foreseeable future.

Another extremely disturbing aspect of the Indian subcontinent is that two of the three largest drug growing areas of the world are located within 400 kilometres of its boundaries; as the area becomes an increasingly important transit route for the international drug trade, it is progressively drawn into the destabilizing dynamics of narco-terrorism, with hitherto unforeseen implications for security far beyond the region.

The third critical reason that necessitates a clear national consensus on terrorism is a consequence of the peculiar vulnerability of democracies in general, and of 'soft states' like India in particular, to the threat of extremism. Terrorist movements, on the one hand, subvert the institutional structure of justice and administration in democracies by their very virulence and indiscriminate violence; on the other hand, they exploit the apparatus of freedom to the fullest in order to restrict the efficacy of actions directed against them. The strategy is simple - and, at least in the short run, devastatingly effective. The illogic of random violence is supported by the selective targeting of key personnel - 'hardliners', administrators, judges and police officials - as well as their families, till virtually the entire apparatus of civil Governance is paralyzed with terror [which, if one goes by past experience, doesn't take very long]. To the extent that the uniformed forces succeed in resisting this ubiquitous collapse of will, they are hampered in their endeavours by the institutions of democracy themselves. The Press, the judiciary, and the entire 'human rights' lobby - each capitulating totally to the terrorist dictat, and stoically indifferent even to the most appalling acts of terrorist inhumanity - are enlisted in this strategy of containment.

The experience in Punjab illustrates this process comprehensively. The Media succumbed to the terrorist dictat absolutely - with the lone exception of the Punjab Kesari group, and they paid for their stubborness and courage in blood. Press releases and notices, including the terrorist imposed 'panthic code' for the people of Punjab and the threats that accompanied it, and reports on the Bhog ceremonies of 'martyrs' to the terrorist cause were carried regularly and prominently by every local paper. The norms for reporting terrorist incidents - including the ban on the use of the word 'terrorist' or its equivalent 'atankvadi' - were adopted with alacrity by the entire media, including the government controlled electronic media and the national papers. The capitulation, however, did not end here. An unthinking, obfuscating sentimentality marked the approach of even some of the best newspapers as they wrote about acts of the most amazing bestiality with a curious indulgence. Much that was written during those years of terror contained a powerful undercurrent of justification of the unjustifiable, the unforgivable, a false sociology of deprivation, poverty and consequent alienation was invented to justify terrorist excesses in India's most prosperous state. And the media carried an uninterrupted stream of interviews and profiles of terrorists and representatives of their front organizations through which they disseminated their violent, murderous propaganda with the same freedom as a candidate for Parliament addressing his constituency.

Meanwhile, the security forces became the exclusive target of the media's righteous indignation. As journalistic norms were thrown to the winds, stories planted by an array of terrorist front organizations alleging the most incredible atrocities were carried without even a minimal effort being made to confirm facts. In this one-sided offensive innumerable 'human rights' organizations joined in with the Press, feeding the ranks of the terrorists with their outrage, and demoralizing and obstructing the men in uniform who stood, virtually alone, against the deluge of militant violence. With logic standing on its head, policemen who risked their lives, and the lives of their families, every minute of every day over years to defend citizens became the villains; and those who gunned down busloads of innocent people were heroes and martyrs. Occasional aberrations by individual policemen were front-paged. The sacrifices of thousands of others were ignored; as were the innumerable cases of harsh disciplinary action taken by the police administration against errant personnel.

The civil administration, similarly, capitulated as soon as the terrorist began to make his presence felt. The normal work of the government, the entire range of developmental activities, was simply abandoned, and the presence of the administration could only be felt in the protected corridors of the Secretariat, where it expressed itself more in a sequence of petty machinations against the security forces than in any constructive task of governance.

The conduct of the judiciary was a mirror image of this abdication of responsibility. After the gunning down of two magistrates in the early phase of the movement, no judge dared to stand out by passing judgment against accused who were backed by forces that, for a while at least, appeared to be demonstrably more powerful than the emasculated apparatus of Government. In 1990, when terrorist violence peaked with 3,785 killings, securing a conviction for terrorist crime was well nigh impossible. Of over 300 such cases in the Majitha Police District of Amritsar, for example, not a single conviction was secured. In 1991, an Amritsar court discharged all 40 of the accused in the Black Thunder case for 'want of evidence', even though their activities and surrender - with a huge cache of arms - was witnessed on television by the entire nation. The message that went out to them was that the terrorist could kill, and that he would be released, either on bail, or through coercive tactics, such as the taking of hostages. The result was not just a complete breakdown of the rule of law, but the battering, the constant attack on every institution of democracy through a crescendo of violence that stunned the majority into inaction.

If India is not to fall victim to these failings, this collapse of reason, again, we must come to terms with the truth about terrorism and reconstruct policy on a realistic basis. Unfortunately, the political and public debate on terrorism still follows simplistic stereotypes - systematically underestimating the dangers of extremist ideologies, alternating between advocacy of blind suppression and utter capitulation, confusing the methods and strategies of terrorism with conventional revolutionary violence, providing political justifications for irreducibly unjustifiable acts of random cruelty - and often romanticizes the murderous depredations of outright criminals. Indeed, much of the current debate appears to be conducted from positions of invincible ignorance.

We must rid ourselves of the false notion that extreme actions must have obvious causes in the social environment, and the equally false idea that such acts are justified. Terrorism is the most unashamed, unrestrained and amoral quest for power - irrespective of its ideological posturing or its religious [fundamentalist] pretensions. It is a political strategy adopted by political groups who reject democracy and the humanistic underpinnings of democracy. Critically, moreover, as a strategy, it is adopted only as long as it has perceived probabilities of success - in other words, only as long as terrorism pays.

Governments in India have displayed a lamentable susceptibility to being frightened to the negotiating table. Nothing could be more counter-productive. You cannot negotiate a fair deal on your knees. You cannot [as experience has repeatedly proven] bring an end to terror around a negotiating table, because the motive of terror is to exact a surrender by terrorizing the other side to concede far more than would be possible or acceptable through negotiations. You can negotiate with the terrorist only after he is himself totally convinced that terror itself will bear no fruit.

But even if this is accepted, it is no simple task to define an appropriate strategy to fight terror. There is, in every democracy, the ever present dilemma between surrender to the terrorist and the possibilities of excesses on the part of the State. This dilemma, however, is a consequence of just another misconception regarding the nature of terrorism and democracy.

The dominant notion of how to handle civil strife, irrespective of its nature, was given shape in the experiences of various democratic governments confronted with diverse expressions of dissent, particularly processions, demonstrations, picketing, and, as an extreme case, rioting. There is, thus, a 'golden rule' of traditional internal security operations: The use of minimum force.

At first glance this looks unexceptionable. Unfortunately, it fails to take into account the level, the scale and the nature of organized terror. The extent of disruption, the complete absence of rules, even the minimal rules of warfare, the sheer viciousness and irrationality encountered in terrorist actions cannot be met by conventional force. As terrorists organize themselves across the nation, and across national boundaries, as they acquire more and more sophisticated weapons and training, they breach every institution of democracy. In a situation of terror, the use of 'minimum force' gives the terrorist his initial 'victories' - the opportunity to demonstrate the moral, political and administrative 'weakness' of the Government, and his comparative 'strength' of purpose and of arms. Such 'demonstrations' win wider support for the 'cause' and inspire numberless acts of carnage. Eventually, as the movement gains strength and the loss of innocent lives becomes unbearable, the Government has to employ even greater force than would have been necessary in the initial stages. During the intervening period of slaughter, political leaders may have established their own 'democratic' and 'humanistic' credentials, but the cost is unacceptable; they cause far greater bloodshed and unnecessary suffering than a clear, preplanned and swift response at the outset which may have been necessitated.

When the civilized system of life is itself threatened with destruction, there is strong, in fact overwhelming argument for reversing priorities and placing the demands of order and security above all other considerations. One may concede that violence breeds violence. But submission to violence generates even more violence. Appeasement is the greatest error against an unscrupulous enemy.

The first duty of any government is to impose order and defend its own existence. Chaos and constant terror cannot be permitted in a civilized nation. While internal security operations, in their classically limited form, may call for minimum force, war has always implied the use of maximum force, irresistibly applied. And terrorism is "a state of war against democracy".

If we are to protect civilized society in India, if we are to win this war, a continuous process of learning and adaptation is necessary. The experiences of those who have been directly engaged in these conflicts can throw important light on the nature of terrorism, local peculiarities, and the success and failure of specific strategies against particular manifestations. General Arjun Ray's **'Psychology of Militancy'** certainly constitutes a significant contribution in this direction.

K P S Gill

13th April 1997 New Delhi

Preface

The Mentality of Political Violence

The study of history, political violence and behavioural psychology, kick started my interest in the mentality of terrorism and militancy. Militancy has all the ingredients of a Greek tragedy - the twilight world, the moral dilemmas, the blatant futility of destruction, the tragic hero and the familiar story of too little, too late.

Violence is the story about basic human relationships - power and struggle, social behaviour - religion and politics. Some do it with their words, some with human will, others with the gun. Terrorism is everything about power. However, the one question that remains unanswered is: whose power — the state, the people or the militant? That is the enigma.

> ".... having power destroys the sanity of the powerful.... It allows their irrationalities to leave the sphere of dreams and come into the real world".
>
> Saul Bellow

Violence has a fatal attraction, it excites the mind.

Violence also fascinates because it brings out the best and worst in man, in society, in nations - a laxative and antitoxin that purges all our filth. I think it was Mao Tse-tung who once said that, the only way to get rid of the gun was to first pick it up and hold it in our own hands.

Violence in Kashmir is unfortunate, but when peace finally descends upon the Valley, Kashmir will undoubtedly be a better place to live in. Despite all the misery that has been heaped upon the people, the healing powers of violence will ultimately prevail. This is the promise of History. It is war and terror that produced Michelangelos, Leonardo da Vincis and the Italian Renaissance, while 500 years of peace and democracy in neighbouring Switzerland only produced the cuckoo-clock. We will, therefore, soon be seeing the dawn of a new era in Kashmir.

In militancy, people form the constituency - for militants as well as for government. Within this constituency some are supporters, some enemies, and some are fence-sitters. Others are simply disgusted with the militant, disgusted with the government as well. In this power struggle there are no neutrals or bystanders, because violence does not respect neutrality - it condemns it.

Which groups influence public opinion? Supporters, enemies or bystanders? This is a very difficult question to answer. History teaches us that at times public opinion is shaped by fence-sitters and the disgusted lot. This is an elementary lesson which is often missed out. The turnout in the parliamentary elections during May 1996 proves the point.

Several books have been written about Kashmir but none on the psychological dimensions of militancy.

Those in the business of managing violence need to understand the mentality of violence, only then can hearts and minds be won over. Elections in Kashmir in 1996 have come as a surprise for Pakistan, as well as for the militants and a host of sceptics in India. Voter turnout by all account was impressive. The only section of Indian society that never doubted the outcome were the Kashmiris. Now comes the psychological Catch-22. That a popular government in Srinagar has been sworn in does not in any way suggest that militancy is over - far from it. Elections have only magnified the psychological inconsistencies in target audiences and the contradictions in tormented minds of those affected. Every violent struggle has its moments of order. Whether it is a blip of hope for Kashmir, only time will tell. Often 'order' is a mirage, it is an affirmation of the yo-yo effect of what terror and political violence are all about. But I think we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. The mentality must address itself to key issues:

- The centre of gravity for military operations as well as the information battle is the people of Kashmir, not the militants. Failure to understand this fundamental is to fall into the familiar trap of the 'numbers-game'.
- Low Intensity Conflict is three-dimensional: government, people and security forces; it should therefore be looked at through wide-angled lens. Any attempt to compartmentalise militancy will be self defeating.
- The onus of changing the perceptions of the Kashmiris is on us. Only openness and good governance will unlock this mental conundrum.
- Keep the commitment of the nation alive.

This book is an attempt in this direction. To ignore the pathology of militancy ultimately leads to fighting militants but not militancy. You destroy your own constituency - the people.

Major General Arjun Ray

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to those who generously helped me colour the mosaic of this book with their knowledge and expertise. In particular, I would like to single out Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Saldanha and Major Abhay Matkar, Army Psychiatrists at Srinagar 92 Base Hospital, Mr KPS Gill; Lieutenant General S Padmanabhan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM; my friend from school days Ranjeet Chordia and Lieutenant Colonel Bhupindra Singh Garewal who meticulously oversaw the final production.

I am deeply grateful to India Today for providing the illustration for the cover of my book.

It is also high time I acknowledged the debt I owe to media persons, who enabled me to gain a deeper insight into the hearts-and-minds battle being waged by us in the Valley.

Above all, this venture would not have been possible but for the love, patience and encouragement of my beloved wife Saroj, daughter Sonali and son Abhimanyu.

I owe a special debt of thanks to my publishers, Manas Publications and particularly to Shri V.K. Garg for their encouragement.

Glossary

Azadi	Independence
Dharma	Religion
Haj	Pilgrimage to Mecca
Ijma	Consensus of the Muslim community based upon what is decided by the scholars and the mullahs
Jawan	Indian soldier
Jannat	Heaven
Jehad	Muslim Holy War
Kalma	Holy Lessons
Milan	Meeting between friends and relations
Mujahid	Freedom fighter
Mukhbir	Indian agent - a traitor
Tanzeem	Militant organisation
Zakat	Muslim religious tax- 2.5 % of one's income

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Part One
MILITANTS

1

The Theory of Terror

"One should die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly."

Friedrich Nietzche,
Twilight of the
Idols, 1989

Insurgents and terrorists, those carrying AK 47s and not the ideologues, have not read Herbert Marcuse or Jean Paul Sartre. They don't have to because the theory of terror comes naturally to a tormented mind. But for counter-revolutionaries like us, be they soldiers, policemen, bureaucrats or politicians, it is absolutely vital to understand what terror and violence are all about. A clear understanding of the philosophy of violence helps in coping and living with it.

Marcuse and Sartre, and now Islamic fundamentalists, are the intellectual mentors of most revolutionary doctrines as well as the philosophy of terror. *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* (1960) sets out Sartre's theories that are outright anti-liberal and anti-democratic. To that extent, they share common ground with orthodox Sunni fundamentalism. In a way, such theories also signal the impotence of intellectuals. Albert Camus was prophetic when he said :

> "All intellectuals want to rule the world by gangsterism".

The *Holy Koran* - the text book of a revealed religion, not only preaches co-existence with other faiths, but is extremely egalitarian and insists upon patriotism for every Muslim. Loyalty to the country - 'hub-ul-watani' - is part of a devout Muslim's 'imaan' according to one 'aayat' of the Koran. But Islam as being practised by Kashmir's Jamaatis is quite different - anti-national, anti-secular and anti-democratic.

> "The politics of socialism and secularism is totally unsound. I do not like any Muslim to adopt socialism and secularism as his political ideal".

Syed Ali Shah Geelani[1]

In another booklet titled *Mukadama-e-Ilhaq* or the Trial of Accession, Geelani writes :

> "You, the nation of Kashmiri Muslims, how long will you continue to remain easy-going slaves? Who has reduced to dust the Taj Mahal of your civilization? Who has undermined your religion and faith? How long will you be put to sleep with lullabies? How long will you remain victims of atheism and godless philosophies".
>
> "Your enemies are bent upon destroying your identity and faith. You are facing a

> ruthless imperialist power whose Brahmanical psyche is bringing new troubles for you everyday. If you do not understand even now, you will not find any place in the pages of history".

By late 1990, the Jamaat, on advice of Pakistan, created the Hizbul Mujahideen, the armed wing of the Party. Under the leadership of its creator, Ahsan Dar, the Hizbul Mujahideen openly advocated Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Such a development - the AK 47isation of a political movement—defined Kashmiri militancy as an Islamic movement. At the same time it also marginalised all pro-'Azadi' (independence) groups, particularly the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

Sartre argues that scarcity is the fundamental issue before Man; and Man forever is in conflict with other men to get whatever crumbs he can lay his hands on. Consequently, life ceases to be a pleasure; it becomes one unbroken string of jabs and struggles against scarcity, and therefore, evil is the basis of Man's ethos. Such a Marxian view of revolution does not hold water in Kashmir - a far cry from Franz Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth'.

Militancy in Kashmir is not a problem of scarcity alone; it has never been. Kashmiri militancy is ethno-religious. Despite a dysfunctional administration, a judiciary and police that are in tatters; despite a militancy which has left nearly 40,000 dead and wounded; despite ISI and despite Pakistan, the socio-economic health file of the State of Jammu and Kashmir is better than all the BIMARU states of North India. And that is saying a lot. Statistics speak for themselves:

- The annual plan of J & K for 1995-96 stands at Rs 1050 crores, but with a deficit of Rs 900 crores, the bill is Rs 1950 crores, four times that of what Kerala gets as Central assistance; and Kerala's population is four times that of J&K. If the Tenth Finance Commission's tax devolutions are cranked in - that is Rs 1240 crores for 1995-96, Central assistance rises to a staggering sum of Rs 3240 crores.
- J & K's per capita income at Rs 4212 (an increase by 15.8 per cent over the 1989-90 base line) compares favourably with other progressive Indian states, and its physical quality of life is well above the national average.
- Only 17 families were homeless in the Valley at the start of militancy in 1990. No America, no Japan, no Germany can boast of such an achievement.
- Per capita household consumption is higher than the national average; most Kashmiris take mutton at Rs 75/- per kg twice a week.
- Infant mortality rate is 70 per thousand against 90 in the Hindi heartland, despite the much harsher climatic conditions.

Sartre and Marx hold opposite view points on violence. To Marx, violence is a means, for Sartre it is an end - Man liberates himself. The Marxian Man liberates himself by the fruits of production - by sweat and toil on the factory floor. In turn, the struggle for increased productivity helps him to attain a special identity alongwith revolutionary consciousness. The Sartrian Man in sharp contrast is unable to obtain revolutionary consciousness except through violence and destruction.

Jamaati fundamentalists are certainly not anarchists; although the brand of warped 'Jehad' (holy war) that they preach smacks of anarchism - pseudo-anarchism to the extent that, a Hindu state ruling a Muslim majority is intrinsically evil and must be pulled down root and branch. And 'Mujahids' (freedom fighters) who die in this struggle will be rewarded with entry into 'Jannat' (Heaven). Jamaatis therefore appear to be in sympathy with Sartre's belief that violence is cleansing and creative; to create you must destroy. "It is man recreating himself" (Sartre).

Violence and terror have been romanticised by Sartre as well as Islamic fundamentalists. 'Martyred' militants find a special resting place in city graveyards and the pages of folk lore. Terror, be it Marxian, anarchist or nihilist, is looked upon as an engine of change. While workers will unite because of their revolutionary fervor and overthrow the capitalists, thereby bringing a quick end to scarcities, Islamic 'Mujahids' will liberate the oppressed Muslims by the slash of their swords, by the shot of their AKs, by the bang of their RDX.

The overwhelming majority of 4.5 million Kashmiris are anti-violence. Their society can be divided into two sections. There is the 'Series' who can really be labelled as a random collection of people, simply because of their ethnic closeness to each other. The others, those in minority, are the 'Group' - the militants, people committed to the cause of 'Azadi', people with unshakeable belief in the power of the gun. About 45.5 per cent of the 'Group' are press-ganged but like Patricia Hearst, they identify themselves with the common objective of 'Jehad'. Call it 'Group identity' or Stockholm

Syndrome, the empathy is absolute. Once you are part of the 'Group' there is no return. Passivity and the reluctant psyche soon turn into violence and aggressive behaviour. Violence binds together its practitioners; it has an adhesive effect. It lends an identity even after death. The 'Group' members never die, they become martyrs. Those press-ganged into militancy do not know how to get out of the Catch-22 situation. Once initiated or 'blooded', the 'tanzeem' (militant organisation) ensures they stay within. Penalties for leaving are high; it is more the fear of being abandoned by the 'Group', leading to loss of both identity and of security that the militant so dearly cherishes. Once you are in, there is no turning back.

> "...... if you are long enough in the underground, you sooner or later pitch everything overboard. From humanity to your ideals. You sink deeper and deeper into the shit. Once you've taken the path, all that's left is a straight road. You can't turn around".[2]
>
> Klein, a RAF terrorist

To think that love and motivation sustains a 'Group' is a load of nonsense. Terror sustains the 'Group', it prevents it from being 'Serialised'.

> "Terror in fact is fraternity. For terror is the guarantee that my neighbour will stay with my brother; it binds my neighbour to me by the threat of the violence it will use against him if he dares to be unbrotherly".
>
> Maurice Crauston

Sartre's vision of the State is the common man's promise and commitment to follow the diktats of the State. In a Muslim society, Islam is not just a religion - it is a concept which transcends the authority of the State.

The State exists but subordinate to and subserving religion; its purpose is to establish the Nizam-e-Mustafa. Here, religion governs the individual's personal, social, economic and political existence from cradle to grave and even onward to Heaven. Islam represents the will of God, to obey the Koran is to obey the highest aspirations of oneself. Implicit in this belief is the conclusion that, a Muslim can be truly free only when he totally and unquestionably obeys the commands of Allah.

One finds a lot of divergence between Sartre and the Jamaatis on the status of Man. Sartre has a negative outlook. To him, love, friendship, innocence and trust are Utopian because Man is intrinsically bad. The world belongs to hate, fear, distrust and a constant power struggle. While Kashmiri fundamentalists regard Man as basically good, Sartre finds Man incapable of being good. Regardless of this difference, there is common acceptance that violence, be it political or religious, is a cry for attention.

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2

Psychodynamics of a Militant

"Loving as I love this life - poetry, and the people, -
how can I not offer up my bones"?

From a poem by Haroldo,
a Salvadorian guerilla

What Motivates a Militant to Kill?

Psychoanalysts have put across complex theories and several explanations. Freud argues that people who suffer Oedipus complex are more prone to violence. The State represents the father-figure which the man resents. Because the State is vested with limitless authority, the resentment is even greater. There has been no direct evidence to suggest Oedipus behaviour amongst Kashmiri militants.

An unhappy and violent environment is another motivational factor which psychologists attribute to militants. Children exposed to sustained homeopathic doses of violence in society, sexual abuse and suffering from social deprivation are considered to be vulnerable. Evidence the world over and Kashmir in particular, does not uphold this theory.

Other psycho-backgrounds have also been clinically examined. There has been no Maladaptive Reaction to excessive permissiveness, affluence and breakdown of traditional values. Through its liberal form of Islam, Kashmiri Sufism has preserved Kashmiri culture, fostered strong family ties and engendered fraternal social values. It is not even Frustration-Anger, a phenomenon that arises when radical change threatens a culture such as the reaction of Iranian and Arabic fundamentalists to the onslaught of the Western media and other cultural invasions. Everything else is frozen in time. The local Kashmiri does not appear to be unduly anxious or perturbed about the 'deSufisation' of his religion.

Another major driving force which European terrorists like the Baader-Meinhof, Weathermen and Angry Brigade have experienced is Utopianism. Watzlawick, a well known social psychologist, describes Utopianism as an urge for seeking perfection in an imperfect society and a demonical desire to change the existing order. Kashmiri militants are anything but Utopians - good Muslims cannot be Utopians because in Islam even Heaven is defined and is not open to interpretation.

Contrary to popular belief, religion is not the primary motivational factor for Kashmiri militants. Kashmiri militancy is not a religious movement (yet). It may however snowball into one if we continue to ignore the fact that, fundamentalism has arrived in the Valley and is spreading with every passing day. Psychoanalysis of 400 captured militants concludes that they took up the gun because of the following compulsions :

Coercion	44.5%
Economic deprivation and deep sense of hurt (alienation)	45.5%
Religion	10.0%

For centuries, from the days of Afghan rule, Kashmiri society has suffered from an acute and exaggerated need to belong - a crisis of ethnic and religious identity, political insecurity and a deep sense of personal deprivation. Such insecurity has largely been responsible for goading young men into the waiting arms of militancy to seek group identity. In informal but structured discussions, captured militants exhibit well known traits of insecurity buttressed by high levels of pathological anxiety. The potential militant is trapped in a mental crossfire - the fear of two guns - one in the hand of security forces and the other held by active militants. The psychological dilemma intensifies till it becomes intolerable to live in the present. A low self-esteem, a weak ego and low frustration tolerance make matters worse. Sooner or later the die is cast; the Devil wins. To the new convert, the elder militants are now his kindred, his religion, his hopes. When everything is lost, hope still lives on, and therefore the choice is quite clear. He makes up his mind; he crosses the Rubicon.

On account of their pronounced psycho-social wounds (some real, some imaginary), militants have a strong tendency to externalise - to blame society and 'others' for their inadequacies, for their plight in imprisonment. Those who are ideologues like Ahsan Dar, Inqalabi, and Harkat leaders like Abu Jindal of Tsrar-e-Sharif fame, suffer from acute symptoms of "exaggerated self-absorption" approaching Narcissim. Megalomanic syndrome and a misplaced sense of history are also evident. These ideologues still fantasise themselves as cast in the mould of Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara, striding larger than life across the stage of Kashmiri history.

The coerced adherents soon develop a strong group identity giving the militant movement and its members strength, security and status. Group psyche polarises thinking, labelling society into two camps; "we" and "they". Consequently, it is always the familiar story of "good vs evil" and "us vs them". In such clear cut equations there is no room for neutrality; "we" are friends and "they" are enemies. Greater the intensity of identification among the "we", the greater the polarisation. More the polarisation, the easier it becomes for an agitated mind to simplify the inherently complex issues of life and seek simple answers.

The 'tanzeem' is now the Group, the new family. The 'tanzeem' gives what the social family could never give; it fulfils all the emotional voids. Above all, it gives reason to hope. In order to belong, the freshly recruited militant pays the ultimate price for belonging - he surrenders himself to the Group.

> "The principal motivation for becoming a terrorist is to belong to a terrorist group".
>
> J M Post

Group cohesion is a driving force which affects soldiers and militants alike. More the uncertainty, greater the need for group cohesion. Wounded soldiers in Srinagar's 92 Base Hospital are often asked whom they would like to be visited by; senior officers' wives, their wives or their fathers. Most desire to meet their company commanders! In all detention camps, there is a system called 'Milan', where once a fortnight the close relatives of militants are encouraged to pay them a visit. During these family get-togethers, while the older militants show less emotional detachment, it is not an uncommon sight to see the younger lot of militants distancing themselves from their loved ones. This is quite apparent both in speech as well as body language. No longer do they experience the same love, the same warmth or the old desire to be reunited. To them filial relations have become inconsequential. Relationships are also fleeting because of the fear of getting too involved emotionally in a situation of war and death. If it is impossible to live in the present, it is pointless to live in the past. The 'tanzeem' is the future, that is what tomorrow is all about. And the 'Revolution', in a literal sense substitutes the family.

Notwithstanding J&K's not-too-bad economic indicators, unemployment is rampant. Gaunt expressions, poor health and youthful faces turning prematurely old are caricatures of economic deprivation. Seventy six per cent militants are between the ages of 15 to 30, 26 per cent are illiterate and 48 per cent are either drop-outs or below high school pass. Even those who want to go to schools cannot. Most schools have been burnt down and those that still stand - mainly 150 'madrassas' and an equal number of schools controlled by the Jamaat-e-Islami's Falah-am-Trust, impart an education with overdoses of rabid religion. There is little room for teaching of chemistry, physics or humanities in these seminaries. So where do the keen students go? Those who have money and the right connections migrate to Indian schools outside the Valley. Those who cannot are condemned to live in a school-less society, in a state of social illiteracy. Remain poor, get poorer, become criminals or pick up the gun; these are the choices. Unless the government is able to provide jobs and avenues for economic progress and employment opportunities, 'tanzeems' will continue to receive a steady stream of recruits.

Alienation is widespread; it is linked to economic deprivation. Kashmiris allude alienation as 'oppression' - political, economic as well as military. In recent years, the latter is more visible and palpable and therefore more wounding. Whether only 20 per cent Kashmiris want Pakistan, whether the majority of those remaining want 'Azadi', or whether a fair proportion are fence-sitters is irrelevant. Such notions are esoteric and divorced from ground realities. The fact of the matter is that a large number of Kashmiri Muslims want some form of independence; call it 'autonomy', 'Azadi', Article 370 or whatever. While the greater number of Kashmiris do not want Pakistan, they do consider Pakistan an ally in the realisation of their aspirations. Naive, but that is the way it is.

The alienation factor in reality is the metaphysical rebellion - loss of human dignity, of human values and the basic needs of a citizen's security and sense of belonging. When tolerance limits are stretched beyond their elasticity, men stop behaving like serfs. Enough is enough; they are not prepared to listen any longer. Such a mental state is described as 'idiocide' or death of oneself, of one's individuality, of one's respect, of one's fundamental rights. The New Man's resentment (negative) and acceptance of his state of hopelessness pushes him over the brink into a positive arousal - the flag of revolt.

> "Better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees".[3]
>
> Albert Camus

There are 100 flags for every one flag. If life is meaningless, Death (for a cause) has meaning. Having thrown away his chains, he is prepared to seek a new identity; and in the process even defy the gods should that be necessary.

> "I rebel therefore we exist".[4]

Towards this conclusion - All or Nothing, it can be said unequivocally that, the Kashmiri militant is an educated man because rebellion is the act of an educated person. Willy-nilly, the quirks of history are strange; alienation may not bring about enough literacy, but it does bring about education. In a wider sense, education generates the spirit and understanding that brings home the realisation that something has to be done to change the status quo. This is the beginning of education. The Kashmiri militant is unlike a nihilist because of his unflinching faith in Islam. The nihilist is an atheist. Like Sade and Dostoevsky, he does not believe in the existence of God. If there was a God, how could he stand by and watch wicked deeds of man and do nothing about it. The Kashmiri militant on the other hand invokes the word of God to usher in the morrow. How and why we have come to this state of affairs has been debated and articulated ad infinitum. Every bookstall in Delhi has at least 30 books on Kashmir, dilating upon political bunglings of the past and pontificating on what needs to be done.

Militants consider Sheikh Abdullah's rule to be the starting point of economic and political oppression. The elderly amongst the militants who remember the Sheikh's days, are angry and puzzled by his double standards. To begin with, the people had blind faith in him, they believed his rhetoric about Kashmir becoming independent. But this was all double-speak, the militants feel. Farooq Abdullah completed what his father had started off - amassing wealth for the Abdullah family at the cost of economic development in the Valley, and playing into 'Indian' hands - the giving up of 'Azadi'. The feelings of oppression are fuelled by two other factors; one, anger at alleged excesses by the security forces (mainly directed against the Border Security Force) and, two; rampant corruption. Several developmental projects in the districts are lying idle as money is syphoned away by petty government officials. One of the District Magistrates of Anantnag (now suspended by Governor Rao) is alleged to have amassed Rupees eight crores (about 2.3 million dollars). It is popularly believed that only about eight paise in a rupee is spent on projects; the rest go proportionately into the pockets of corrupt officials, contractors and now the militants. These are not only perceptions but also beliefs. As long as they continue to exist, we are not going to see the early end of militancy. We are in for a long haul despite the presence of a representative government in Srinagar. Because, the task of erasing the imprints of earlier "rule" and rulers is very hard and very slow.

A point that is often lost sight of by politicians, generals and civil servants who are involved in combating militancy is that alienation is not a legal or a political issue; neither is it determined by logic. Rather, it is a matter of the heart. Whether 'oppression' and 'alienation' are real or imaginary is immaterial. It matters little what is right or what is wrong. What matters is how people perceive something to be right or wrong. We live today in a world where even morality is negotiable; it is therefore upto the authorities to correct perceptions, redress the wrongs, and where wrongs are big, to atone for them. Only then will they be able to alter beliefs. Till such a down-to-earth approach is adopted, the alienation factor, fuelled by Islamic fundamentalism, will continue its roller coaster ride.

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3

The Mind of a Militant

"I kill therefore I am"

There is no such thing as an archetypal militant mind. Mind and motivation vary because of the divergent backgrounds and operating environment in which militants live.

> "...... there are as nearly as many variants of personality who become involved in terrorist pursuits as there are variants of personality".[5]
>
> JM Post

Media (TV especially and to lesser extent films) has been largely responsible for projecting violence not only as a tool for obtaining one's desires but also as an act of "rage" or "madness". Even well known psychoanalysts have perpetuated this myth by ascribing psychological disorders, the four major ones being :

1. Reaffirmation of self-esteem.
2. Depersonalisation - the desire to get away from

oneself merely because of low esteem.

3. The crying need for intimacy.
4. Belief in the effectiveness and cleansing values of violence and killing.

Such psychological beliefs are wrongly founded and have often been responsible for hostage rescue operations being messed up. In most hostage shootouts, more people have died as a result of assaults on the hostages (taken) than through direct killing by the terrorists. The belief that militants are diabolical has buttressed arguments in favour of exercising the hard option, the premise being that negotiating with madmen is futile.

> "....this psychologizing of the problem produces an immunization strategy. By making the accusation of mental illness stick, everyone else is acquitted of guilt or participation. The social, legal, economic and other bases of all these movements need no longer be considered".[6]
>
> Michael Stohl

Militants are not criminals or psychopaths or men with twisted minds. They are unquestionably genuine, normal and straight people, as normal as the neighbour next door, the vegetable seller, the policeman on the beat, the banker, the soldier, the bureaucrat, the salesman. The only difference is that militants have a psyche and a logic of their own. This is also borne out by the fact that Kashmiri militants even in captivity are not found distressed. Only 3.22 per cent show symptoms of mental anxiety.

What is the Militant Saying?

Various revolutionaries have interpreted the militant's message to society. Bakunin calls it the 'propaganda of the deed' and Mao describes it as 'armed propaganda'- the technique of speaking with action and not words:

> "I kill therefore I am".
> "Listen to me; I have a problem".
> "Look at me; you ignore me at your peril".
> "Look what we can do. There is yet more to come".

पुस्तकालय
181461
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

The militant's act of terror is a desperate cry for attention. He demands that the State changes and gives concessions, as well as find answers to his problems. Militant minds are prone to follow Gresham's Law of Terrorism:

> "....they who spill the most blood get the biggest headlines".

As long as militants receive more than their share of publicity they are happy. Militants simply want people looking at them, they don't want too many people dead.

No discussion on the logic of violence is complete ;without reference to the role of foreign mercenaries in the Valley. Pakistan has sent in these mercenaries to arouse revolutionary and Islamic consciousness in an 'apathetic and irreligious' population (Foco Theory), stiffen the fighting potential of Kashmiri militants, provide field expertise and reassure the local Kashmiris that the entire Islamic 'ummah' (community) is actively supporting their cause and struggle. 'Guest' militants constitute about 15 per cent of the total militant population in J&K. Of these, about 70 per cent are Pakistanis, 25 per cent Afghans, with another 5 per cent as an assorted mix from other Islamic countries. While a large majority of these mercenaries are religiously bigoted, many are adventurists too. Nearly all have been schooled in 'madrassas' - seminaries attached to mosques.

What is the Ideological Drive for Foreign Mercenaries?

To wage holy war by holy terror.

Revolutionaries have always been great advocates of exporting revolution. Che Guevara and the Communists scored limited successes till history proved them wrong.

Then came the Khomeini Revolution in Iran in 1979. In its wake, Algeria and the Middle East were flooded by various export brands of Shiite terrorist groups, all owing allegiance to Iran. It is now the turn of Sunni fundamentalists who have received some encouragement after events in Afghanistan. Kashmir is their new battleground.

Exporting revolution, be it old-style Marxism or Islam can be explained by Che Guevara's Foco Theory. Drawing the wrong conclusion from the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara believed that :

> "One does not necessarily have to wait for a revolutionary situation to arise, it can be created".

What happened to Che Guevara's final days in the Bolivian jungles is well known. History bears testimony that for lasting success, a revolution has to be conceived and executed indigenously. History also records that a revolutionary situation has to be first created through political mobilization and not by the gun.

Mohammad Safiq alias Abu Jindal of Harkat-Ul-Ansar (HUA) is an archetypal mercenary fired by religious revolutionary fervour. Twenty four years old and a resident of Faislabad (Pakistan), he studied for three years at Jamia Masjid Bilal in Faislabad. He followed this up with a Masters in Arabic. At the time of his capture near Tsrar-e-Sharif in March 1995, he had trained and fought as a 'mujahid' in Afghanistan for three years. He is disciplined, disinterested in local politics and is non-materialistic. His religious views are orthodox and fanatic:

> "....God's command is superior to parental command... A true Muslim fights with faith in Allah only. It is Allah and Allah alone who decides where and how a Muslim should die. We are not scared of death.... All areas belonging to Muslims under occupation by others must be and will be liberated. I have come here because this is a Muslim area being ruled by non-Muslims. We have come for religion. Economics and materialistic factors have no meaning for me".[7]

Such intense consciousness is quite obviously lacking even amongst hard-core Kashmiri militants.

The good news is that despite the undoubtedly better fighting qualities and religious fanaticism of foreign mercenaries, they have failed to arouse the revolutionary and religious consciousness of Kashmiris. 'Guest' militants look down upon Kashmiris and Kashmiri militants with utter disdain. However, such feeling and intensity is mutual.

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4

The Normal and Abnormal

When Dudayev (the dead Chechen leader) was asked whether he regretted that 30,000 people had died in the three-year war, he replied:

"None at all. Never felt better in all my life".

Attributed to BBC

Every society lays down its ground rules for abnormal and deviant behaviour. Those who do not stick to accepted norms are labelled as mavericks. In some-ways, militants are mavericks because they are non-conformists, independent minded and follow different rules of engagement. Their goals are political, not criminal, although the means they choose are violent. They passionately believe that violence and violence alone can awaken and arouse the passive population. Persons with such logic and insight cannot be described as abnormal. The militant is not a psychopath. He kills for a political purpose, the psychopath kills for pleasure:

> "He was a homicidal psychopath. He killed because he enjoyed it and the more helpless the victim the better".

Fredrick Forsyth about
Carlos, the Jackal

Recall Susan Adkin's involvement in the chilling Manson family killing. She describes the sweetness of tasting human blood after participating in the murder of Sharon Tate. "Wow, what a trip!" she said to her cell mate Virginia. "I thought 'to taste death, and yet give life'. Have you ever tasted blood?" (question to Virginia) she asked. "It's warm and sticky and nice". Militants do not fall into the class of Jackals and Susan Adkins.

Although both exhibit common behavioural traits, militants and psychopaths are at opposite ends of the pole. The militant has no personal involvement; killing is dehumanised - the victim is faceless, unknown to him. Often the militant is ordered or nominated to carry out the killing - killing is institutionalised.

A bomber pilot drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A soldier kills and maims the enemy. A terrorist blows himself up in a crowded bus and kills innocent passengers. History is replete with numerous examples, where soldiers have accepted few constraints on their acts of violence, no conventions of war, no innocents, no bystanders. Is there a difference? One has the legal sanction to kill, the other does not. Is there any convergence? Yes;

all soldiers and militants fight and kill for political goals.

Going purely by psycho-logic, both soldier and militant are not abnormal. Both have a common purpose and common meeting points - social, political and tribal (Hutu and Tutsi genocides). The use of violence is common to all but with a difference; the militant is more of a political animal than the soldier. And political animals are not abnormal.

Society would like to believe that all behaviour that violates societal norms is abnormal. But to think that killing by militants does not meet the approval of a certain section of the society is being gullible. The segment of the population which is aggrieved or deprived, whole-heartedly approves and supports the militants' violent means.

Suicide for a cause, for a political goal is a rational act. Such rationality is called martyrdom. A captain who goes down with his ship to the ocean floor is not mentally ill. Neither is the Buddhist monk who immolates himself in the streets of Saigon, or the Gandhi who goes on a fast unto death to extract British concessions. The same can be said of the early Christian martyrs. By the same token, the Hamaas human bombs that kill innocent Israeli passengers on Bus 18 are not mad men either. They too are martyrs, they too are 'normal' people.

There is nothing pathological about war and martyrdom; both inspire heroism, both seek an ideological end, both are rational, both have societal approval. Shiite martyrdom and Kamikaze are good examples to look at.

After the death of the Prophet in 632 AD, Abu Bakr (not a member of the Prophet's family) was appointed successor leaving out Ali, the Prophet's cousin. Later on, Ali married Fatima, (the Prophet's daughter) and was appointed Khalifa. Soon after, unfortunately, during a battle with Yazid in 661 AD, Ali was murdered. Shiites regard Hussain's death (Ali's son) at Karbala in 680 AD as the supreme martyrdom. The entire episode lays stress on Shiite claims that succession should have been from the Prophet. Such a belief underpins martyrdom and sacrifice as an essential part of Shiite belief.

Iran, after Khomeini, has seen the emergence of two terrorist groups who advocate the concept of martyrdom as their core concept - the Brides of Blood and the Party of Allah. Answering the call of the Imam, Allah's representative on Earth, young Iranian girls flocked to become exclusive members of the Brides of Blood to avenge the death of Hussain through their own martyrdom. The belief is that Hussain did not become a martyr; rather he was chosen by Allah to be one. The reader will remember Sanah Muheidhi who drove a Peugot filled with explosives into an Israeli convoy. Sanah, like all martyrs, had the 'smile of joy' or 'bassamat-al-farah' when her car hit the Israeli lorry. She was smiling as she died because of the joy of having to lead a better life in the next world. In accordance with Shiite tradition, she was required to leave behind a will.

> "........ be merry, to let your joy explode as
> if it were my wedding day".

Sanah Muheidhi, 09 April 1985, in South
Lebanon (will to her mother)

The Brides of Blood are 'pure' virgins who have avowed to avenge the death of Hussain. According to popular belief, those brides who die will be given the best husbands by Hussain.

> "........ acts that elevate war to the level of love".[8]
>
> An Algerian fundamentalist, Hamzuh Kaidi

Shiite martyrdom follows the Islamic concept of Paradise (Jannat), a place of satiation where all desires are fulfilled. This is the anti-thesis of Hindu 'moksha' - emancipation from all desires.

Shiites believe that girls at 9 and boys by 16 are mature enough to discriminate between right and wrong. Being under-20s they are pure; uncorrupted by Satanic civilization; and therefore ideal recruits for the Party of Allah, the torch-bearer of Islamic Revolutionary Movement. The world was shocked to learn that 75,000 children had been recruited as `Children of the Imam'. It was shocked even more to see television pictures of child-soldiers advancing ahead of Iranian assaults against fortified Iraqi positions, clearing paths through deep minefields. To the surprise of Western observers, the Children felt loved, wanted and cared for - they were also the 'Republican Guards' of the Imam. During the 1984 Iranian offensive into the Kheybar region of Iraq, children formed 57 per cent of the attacking forces. Of these, nearly 10,000 were killed, wounded or captured. It is with great national pride that Iranian newspapers of the day showed empty classrooms as a mirror of martyrdom.

> "Fifteen years old, 20, 25, 14 years old... A desert of mines, and they like a garden in the morning ready to blossom, to scatter their petals on the wind, and take wing. They would pass over the mines, eyes no longer seeing, ears no longer hearing.... An instant, and when the dust settled, there was nothing. Pieces of flesh and bone scattered across the desert clinging to the rocks".
>
> *Ettelaat*, a Tehran daily, 07 May, 1982

Sunni Muslims do not approve of the suicide model of martyrdom. "Man dies only by the will of God according to the book which fixes the term of his life". Fortunately, there has not been a single known case of militant suicide attack in Kashmir. Martyrdom is a Shiite concept and with a few exceptions, the Shia population in the Valley has distanced itself from such political violence. But the concept of Shiite proves beyond doubt that religious or political martyrs are not mentally deranged persons. Kamikaze is another example of sane men killing themselves for a cause.

Kamikaze was the 'Divine Wind' that scattered the assembled Mongol fleet and hence saved the Japanese race. The Japanese Emperor is believed to be the Son of Heaven. Even after the Second World War he could not be put in the dock for Japanese war crimes. The Emperor is above mortals and hence dying for him is an exalted death. Because of this psychological acceptance, motivating Japanese fighter pilots to dive onto the decks of American warships was an easy task. Kamikaze pilots were rational; they were students of law and humanities -

academic, serious and imbibed with all the graces and culture of the Land of the Rising Sun. They had no trace of any abnormality.

Kamikaze pilots had a 'spiritual calm'.

> "When selected for an actual mission, they reacted with pride, whereas those not selected reacted with bitter and sometimes hysterical disappointment. On the night before the mission, those chosen, typically slept peacefully and, on awakening, prepared for their mission in an orderly and dignified way. After a brief departure ceremony, involving the pouring of ceremonial cups of 'sake' for each pilot by the commanding officer and a brief farewell speech, the pilots took off for their ultimate destruction".[9]
>
> "The Japanese way of life is indeed beautiful and I am proud of it, as I am of Japanese history and mythology which reflects the purity of our ancestors and their belief in the past ..... The way of life is the product of all the best things which our ancestors have handed down to us. And the living embodiment of wonderful things out of our past is the Imperial Family which, too, is the crystallisation of the splendour and beauty of Japan and its people. It is an honour to be able to give my life in defence of these beautiful and lofty things".[10]
>
> Letter by Lieutenant Yamaguchi Teruro to his father before the mission

> ".....we shall serve the nation gladly in its present painful struggle. We shall plunge into enemy ships cherishing the conviction that Japan has been and will be a place where only lovely homes, brave women and beautiful friendships are allowed to exist.......".[11]

Kamikaze beliefs were more patriotic than religious. The pilots were super-charged mentally, they believed in racist extremism like neo-Nazis in South Africa and the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. The spirit of 'Bushido' was everywhere. It was intensely felt because the superior way of life was under threat from baser races.

Hunger strikes and even death by hunger strike has been a popular form of political protest. The Catholic IRA popularised this, and even the Baader-Meinhoff Group adopted these tactics of protest.

Ten members of the IRA in British prisons died of self-starvation. Their death was aimed at focussing their political struggle against the British. Remember "Bobby Sands". These terrorists, like the Baader-Meinhoff Group, committed suicide not so much of their own volition but 'collective pressures' to conform. The mass suicide by the followers of cult leader Jim Jones in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978, was mainly because of group pressures. In all these examples, suicide had peer approval, along the same lines like the old custom of 'sati' in India where the widow immolated herself on the husband's pyre. Closer home, LTTE suicide squads against well guarded persons and ships, have epitomised the cyanide culture.

Are Fanatics Abnormal?

Just because their enthusiasm and commitment are more than normal, it does not make them unnatural or untypical. Surprisingly, all captured militants who were psychoanalysed, turned out to be non-fanatics. Results speak for themselves:

Traits of Fanatic	*Present* %	*Absent* %	*Ambivalent* %
1. Focused view on life	25	60	15
2. Insensitivity	15	75	10
3. Personalised view of the world	10	90	–
4. Loss of critical judgement	10	90	–
5. Inconsistency	05	80	15
6. Certainty	20	80	–
7. Over simplification	10	90	–
8. Resistance to change	25	75	–

The psychological bottom-line is quite clear; there are no abnormal militants. This is a very positive sign because it makes the task of winning over the population that much easier, provided we can match the militant's ethno-religious logic and commitment.

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5

Aesthetics and Revolutionary Psyche

"Art for the sake of art".

Oscar Wilde

"Art is a visual experience".

MF Hussain

As part of a re-education package for detained militants, one expected that engaging captured militants in handicraft making and encouraging militants to write, sing or paint would soothen their troubled minds. Paper, paints and brushes were doled out liberally. Musical instruments were procured and a music room was set up. The initial response was encouraging but slowly and gradually we were back to square one. There is widespread belief that revolution is an artistic process; that guerillas and terrorists have finely developed aesthetic brains. This is not so.

The conclusion was clear : militants lack aesthetics; they are driven by the right side of their brain. Despite poor educational levels and generally low IQ (the percentage of matriculates and above is 14), most militants are logic driven; their left-brain is comparatively subdued. Strangely enough, this psychological phenomenon was apparent even amongst militants, who had been carpet weavers and shawl makers earlier on before picking up the AK 47. Militants are afraid of art because art asks questions and raises doubts, because art glorifies the Individual and not the Group. Militants favour science because science is all about facts, about results, about reality. Art tranquilises the viewer and fantasises the artist; in its search for beauty, art becomes unreal. In trying to create beauty and poignance, the artist forsakes reality. Nietzche once said :

> "No artist tolerates reality"

The artist's message is personal, not so much for the viewer or listener, but for himself. Art has little ideological content or message for the viewer since it does not intend to bring about any change. As MF Hussain puts it, "Art is a visual experience". Art is really for the sake of art, for the sensuality of the beholder. No explanations are offered, no thinking is required. Even the visual and performing arts have failed to change society. To that extent, art lacks the robustness and aggression of the peasant masses. There is a reciprocity between art and aggressiveness, the former is abstract and the latter is real.

To the artist the expressions of pain and pleasure are the same; like watching the football finals of the World Cup on the television screen. Watching it live inside the stadium is a different and moving experience, possibly an experience of a lifetime since it pumps the adrenalin. That is being revolutionary!

History is full of examples wherein Art and Rebellion seem to be at cross purposes. While Plato exiled poets from his *Republic,* Rousseau (1712-1778) criticised art as being a corrupted and distorted form of Nature. His well known essay, 'Has the re-establishment of the sciences and arts contributed to purify manners?' argues that arts and sciences have had a corruptive influence over society. Although a musician of repute, Rousseau was a passionate naturalist, who believed that Man was essentially good but had been contaminated by an overdose of arts and science. In his famous *Dialogues: Rousseau Juge de Jean-Jacques,* Rousseau extolls his thesis and cries out for Man's return to Nature. Rousseau's doctrine of Naturalism emphasised simplicity in life and the need to seek peace and harmony in nature. Urban civilization was distasteful to him; rural life had greater harmony and reality.

The French Revolution, one of the great political landmarks in European history, witnessed the decline of art. It gave birth to no great artist except Sade. Commenting on the state of art during this period, Albert Camus once remarked :

> "The only poet of the times was the guillotine".

Even Russian revolutionaries held art in contempt. Pisarev, the well known Russian nihilist and an advocate of practical values, once remarked :

> "I would rather be a Russian shoemaker than a Russian Raphel".

Yet another Russian nihilist, Nekrassov, often remarked that he preferred a piece of cheese to all of Pushkin. And even Tolstoy, who authored great works like *War and Peace* and *Anna Karennia* propped up his works with underpinnings of Realism. *War and Peace* glorifies life itself - to lead a life which gives the best for oneself and the family. In Tolstoy, Russian Realism touched its highwater mark.

Take Marx, one of the greatest revolutionaries in history. To him art was contemporary, not eternal, it lacked permanence. Consequently, the only true art was revolutionary art. And revolutionary art was never neutral. Mayakovsky, the greatest poet of the Russian Revolution, once remarked:

> "Those who are not with us are against us".

Militancy in Kashmir has virtually brought to an end the growth of literature, even revolutionary literature. One cannot recall any worthwhile Kashmiri book or poem or painting in the past seven years. The Academy of Art and Culture in Srinagar lies in disuse. Such a state of affairs is easily explained. When people suffer they lose the taste for literature and aesthetics. Literature does not even provide an escape into the world of the unreal.

6

The Portrait of a Kashmiri Militant

The media romanticises the militant because militancy makes good copy. In turn, militants also help the media. They project a mystique which weaves legends of invincibility around them. Their weak ego and low esteem receive a booster. Mast Gul, in retrospect, is a case in point.

In hindsight, banning the entry of the media into Tsrar-e-Sharif during early April of 1995 was a colossal blunder. Even after the first fire in the town on the night of 8/9 May, the media could have been sent in to see the true picture for themselves. That the Administration failed to sieze this media opportunity, is also a fact. What analysts overlook is the background reality - that the media blew Mast Gul and his minions out of all proportions - into Che Guevaras. Mast Gul was splashed across the television screens and centre-spreads of all newspapers. He was everywhere - long haired, a Jesus Christ look-alike, AK 47 in hand, the left forefingers raised in victory sign, Mast Gul pontificating on his being ordained by Allah to slay the infidels and restore Islam, Mast Gul, the torch bearer of the Islamic 'ummah', Mast Gul the invincible, the ruthless who only the other day publically hanged a 'mukhbir' (Indian agent), Mast Gul the saviour, standing larger than life with Pakistani and Hizbul flags atop the Holy Shrine. When Jamaati leaders and politicians from the Hurriyat visited Tsrar-e-Sharif, the TV showed militants firing AKs into the air, the V-sign everywhere, and Mast Gul, the colossus, leading the pack everywhere - at the Shrine, in his field fortifications, on some of the heights, in the public square. Mast Gul was Superman. The media loved Mast Gul and he obliged them with his histrionics and rustic profundity.

The crescendo kept rising to intolerable heights. The Administration got panicky and painted itself into a corner. It clamped a ban on the media. This act sealed the fate of Tsrar-e-Sharif, as no third party view was henceforth available. The rest is history.

Mast Gul was a creation of the media - Indian, Pakistani and Western. He was projected as the symbol and epitome of what a Kashmiri militant is supposed to be - a holy crusader, intelligent, strong-willed and an egotist. The truth is quite the opposite.

Mast Gul was never the leader of a 'tanzeem'; he belonged to the ranks. A prototype militant - illiterate, with low intelligence, more an adventurist than a holy crusader. He knew little of Islam and cared even less. As for the Kashmiris, he had scant respect and showed utter contempt towards them.

The indoctrination levels and fighting qualities of Kashmiri militants are suspect in the eyes of ISI as well as all the foreign mercenaries one speaks to There is a lot of truth in this insight. Kashmiri militants generally put up a fight when their group is stiffened by a few mercenaries. Left to themselves, they prefer to hit and run. There are exceptions of course. Based on the author's experience of combating militancy and interaction with captured militants, a thumb-nail sketch can be drawn and some conclusions arrived at:

- Kashmiri militancy is not a religious movement yet, and therefore Islam is not the prime motivation for a Kashmiri to pick up the gun. Only 10 per cent fall into the category of zealots. The overwhelming majority are not Islamic fundamentalists or religious fanatics. This effectively demolishes the popular 'jehad' theory.
- Alienation, born of economic deprivation, is the principal well spring from which militancy is born and sustained.
- Militants cannot be categorised as "fanatics", "mad men", "psychopaths" or "mentally abnormal". They are normal people but with a different psycho-logic of their own. Their mental chemistry and neuro-dynamics are no different to that of the common man on the street.
- Each militancy has its lumpen elements and Kashmiri militancy is no different. A large number of those press-ganged have turned militancy into a vocation, i.e., have criminalised militancy. This phenomenon can be ascribed to failure of ideological goals. When people give up their support to militancy, or the security forces

have been able to effectively bring down the levels of violence to manageable limits, there is a proportionate increase in criminalisation. Under these conditions, militants substitute other goals. In Kashmir, it is a story of Power and Money, both obtainable only through organised crime like extortion, bank raids, kidnapping and ransoms, bogus taxation, fake party collections and illegal smuggling of timber. Much of this is being done in the name of 'jehad' and behind the well camouflaged screen of militancy. On a conservative estimate, nearly 30 per cent militants fall into the lumpen category and their numbers are steadily rising.

- The average militant is emotionally insecure, has a low IQ, low frustration tolerance and a weak ego. Low educational levels (74 per cent are under matriculates) and illiteracy complete the portrait.
- The young (in their 20s) are mostly illiterate, unmarried and emotionally detached from their families, although they show genuine concern for safety and security of their family members. Most young members of militant groups have not visited their homes for almost a year. The elderly (about 30 per cent) however miss their family and would like to be reunited with them.

The portrait of the Kashmiri militant is not a very clear picture because of the lurking doubts and misgivings in his mind—about ideological goals, about the revolutionary consciousness of Kashmiris and even his fighting capabilities. Pakistan is alive to this situation and is therefore going about painting the portrait green with palettes full of Islamic paint.

Part Two
PEOPLE

पुस्तकालय
181461
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

7

Pakistan's Info-Islamic War

Kashmiri society is under intense psychological pressure from all directions - from within the community, the 'ummah', from Pakistani propaganda, from the militants, from the security forces. The psychological graph has its troughs and peaks but one phenomenon is quite evident: although political violence does have an inoculating effect, Kashmiris are showing signs of fatigue. The high voter turnout in the 1996 Baramula and Anantnag constituencies for the Lok Sabha clearly suggests that the people are simply fed up of violence. It is also clear that the gun-option has failed. So what is next? They desparately want an honourable way out of the political impasse. The first good news is that the average Kashmiri hankers for a political solution. The other good news is that he does not want Pakistan. This transformation has come about through default, by Pakistan, because those who run the proxy war in Kashmir - the ISI, have either read the wrong history books or drawn the wrong conclusions. And above all, they took

Kashmiris for granted. Too late did the puppeteer realise that the "puppets" too have a mind of their own.

Strategic Objectives of Proxy War

After fighting three unsuccessful wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971, Pakistan realised that annexation of Kashmir through a conventional military operation was not possible. Militarily, India's qualitative and quantitative superiority was too much of an impediment to their desire of annexing Kashmir. Therefore, it was sometime in 1984 that the late President Zia-ul Haq decided to launch a proxy war in Kashmir. Military confidants assured the President that with Pakistan's experience of massive infiltration into J&K (Operation GIBRALTAR) in 1965, and emerging templates from their current involvement in Afghanistan, the proxy war had a far greater chance of success than the conventional option. With slight refinements, the Afghan model could be replicated in Kashmir, these zealots promised. This presumption was yet another blunder. All insurgencies have some common reference points, but in the final analysis, each one is different and there are no eternals or constants to see you through all of the Low Intensity Conflicts (LICs).

However, Pakistan was able to switch its complete attention to Kashmir only in 1987. This delay was occasioned by the ISI's preoccupation with and deep involvement in Afghanistan. The interim period between 1984 and 1985 was gainfully utilised to exploit the windows of opportunity through use of subversion, propaganda and disinformation and by strengthening the roots of the Jamaat-e-Islami, so as to radicalise and render fundamentalist the liberal Kashmiri Sufi, the youth in particular.

Topac Amru was an Inca prince who successfully fought a guerrilla war against the invading Spaniards in early 18th century Uruguay. Fired by the accounts of success of the prince as documented in history, President Zia code-named the proxy war, Operation TOPAC. The document outlining the operation was approved during a top level conference of Zia's Corps Commanders sometime in April 1988. Operation TOPAC envisaged three overlapping phases being conducted under the umbrella of a well-thought out psychological warfare comprising:

- Raising the level of anti-India feelings amongst Kashmiris.
- Creating militancy and projecting it as a home-grown Islamic uprising; and,
- Bringing about a state of collapse in urban as well as rural areas with Srinagar as the centre of gravity for political and religious mobilisation. Srinagar is to be India's Saigon, India's Kabul. The breakdown is to be brought about by the strategy of "death by a thousand cuts" and keeping the "pot boiling". Such a low-cost, low-risk proxy war would bleed the Indian security forces, bleed the Indian economy to sustain Kashmir, and bleed the political and popular will of the country to hold on to the Valley . So that the Indians are not provoked into conventionalising the Kashmir conflict (a scenario where India would benefit from its sheer size and quality

of military power), the proxy war must not overboil under any circumstances, and the threshold level must therefore be maintained at all costs to prevent a conventional showdown.

Strategic Objectives of Pakistan's Information War

Islamic revivalism in Kashmir and the consequent shift from a secular to a Muslim identity of the Kashmiris was initiated in 1984. The principal theme of this radical change was that the only route to Kashmiri Liberation was Islam. The rise of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and the Al-Jihad movement emphatically raised the banner of 'Islamic Revolution'. Religious revivalism was not confined to Sunnis alone. Acquiring a 'Kashmiri character', even the Shias in the Valley jumped on to the Islamic bandwagon. The impetus came from Ayatollah Khomeini and the Tehran-based Islamic Bloc. Khomeini's paternal ancestors lived in Kashmir ever since the 18th century and the family in Iran was known as the Hindi, i.e., of the Indians. No surprise therefore that a large number of Kashmiri Shias were given Iranian scholarships for pursuing religious study in the centres at Najaf and Qom, both of which had played a pivotal role in the Iranian Revolution of the Ayatollah.

Islamisation of Kashmiri Muslims is a pre-requisite to arouse the revolutionary and religious consciousness of the people to overthrow the Indian yoke. This is Pakistan's first and most critical objective - critical, because the major obstacle that lies between Pakistan and Kashmir is the philosophy of Sufism which is open, catholic and non-doctrinaire. In the Fourth century, Buddhism arrived in the Valley and readily absorbed Hinduism. The fusion of these two great religions resulted in Shaivism.

Kashmir has given birth to a form of Shiva worship quite dissimilar to the Shaivite practises elsewhere in India. The Shaivism we refer to is no more than the Kashmiri variant of Hinduism. It may have absorbed some concepts and practices from Budhism but its roots and substance are essentially Hindu. With the arrival of Islam in Kashmir in the Fourteenth century, there was a second fusion - Islam plus Shaivism that is Sufism. Kashmiri Sufism is the thirteenth brand of Sufism in the world, different from all other twelve. The Valley's geographical isolation and the confluence of the world's three great religions have shaped its unique ethos. The Kashmiri, therefore, is a healthy mix of three composite cultures - part Hindu, part Buddhist and part Muslim. Even fourteen centuries after conversion to Islam, the Kashmiri Muslim of today continues to retain several Hindu practises to include:

- Worshiping idols or relics is anathema to Sunni Muslims; but the Kashmiris indulge in this practice. The holy relics at Hazratbal, Tsrar-e-Sharif and Baba Rishi in Gulmarg are the holiest of Sufi shrines in the Valley.
- Zain Shah Sahib is revered by Muslims and Hindus alike. A Hindu by birth, Janak was born at Kishtwar. As a young man he came and settled down at Aishmuqam which lies at the entrance of the Pahalgam Valley. Janak changed

his name to Zain Shah and lived in a cave, seeking communion with God and emancipation from the terrestrial world. Every year, both Hindus and Muslims jointly celebrate Zain Shah Sahib's Urs.

- The Amarnath Cave was discovered by the Muslim Mallicks of Pahalgam. Even till today, 10 per cent of the offerings by Hindu devotees at the Holy Shrine are distributed amongst the Mallicks.
- The manner of reciting the Koran in Kashmiri mosques is similar to the incantation of the verses of the Gita. This is peculiar to Kashmir only.
- Hindu surnames like Dar, Rishi, Pandit, Beetab and Bhat are as common as Johns and Smiths and Sharmas.

- Kashmiris do not eat beef.

DeSufisation is therefore the first goal of Islamisation; the tool being employed is religious fundamentalism. The word 'fundamentalism' is not being used in a loose sense. Adherence to the fundamental doctrines of any religion is not fundamentalism. But when religion becomes dogma it manifests intolerance. It then dictates politics, education and economics. When the rule of law is subordinated to the Word, then fundamentalism holds sway.

The Pakistani media and the Valley Press portray Kashmiri militancy as a 'jehad' against forced Hindu occupation of a predominantly Muslim majority state. The message being spread is that Islamic militancy is actually part of a greater 'Pan Islamic' movement sweeping the world over.

Pakistan continues to package its brand of Wahabi fundamentalism very cleverly. The psychological warfare themes are simple and easy to understand and are put across by loud speakers from the local mosques, by the vernacular Press, by the Jamaatis and Pakistan TV and radio. The themes misquote history as well as religion:

- In recent history, Muslim nations have experimented with a wide variety of Western concepts of political ideology. They ranged from nationalism, science and rationalism, liberal reformism to democracy, socialism and pan-Arabism. All have failed. The only alternative now lies in turning back to orthodox Islam. This exposes a modified Sunni version of the Shiite theory of Mahidism. Shiites believe that when injustice becomes intolerable, a Mahadi (the Prophet to be) will manifest himself to restore peace and justice. Even the Bhagvad Gita says so: "Yada yada hi dharmasya glaanirbha vathi Bharata; .... dharma sansthhapanasthaya sambhawani yugi yugi". The Sunni model of this Millenarian movement[12] replaces the classic Redeemer by the Islamic Mahadi. People who perceive themselves to be suppressed, persecuted and isolated are vulnerable; they buy the message easily. The orthodox mullahs are holding out hope for the Kashmiris: "accept Islam, salvation is round the corner".
- Hindu culture has degenerated into vulgar Western liberalism like democracy, nationalism and secularism. Such isms and concepts are anti-Islam.
- 'Ummah' is what will sustain Muslim brotherhood. All Muslims of the world, irrespective of

colour and nationality, are one. The spirit of 'ummah' therefore scoffs at the ideas of nationalism and natural frontiers. As a consequence, 'ummah' cannot have a fatherland or motherland. This explains why guest 'mujahids' from other Muslim countries have come to the Valley to wage 'jehad' against the Hindu infidels.

- The 'ummah' militates against a coordinating centre and denies individual states the sovereign right to manage their own affairs. As a result, Muslim society must always follow the guidelines issued from time to time by the Sunni Wahabi Order and not Iranian diktats.
- Kashmiris need to be reminded about what reinforces the sense of community - of 'ummah'. The 'ummah' is kept together by strict adherence to Do's and Dont's for all pious Muslims. These are:
  - — The Five Essentials of Islam must be regularly and religiously practised, i.e., 'namaz' (prayers five times a day), 'kalma'(lesson), 'zakat' (2.5 per cent of one's earning as charity), 'Ramadhan' (fasting) and 'Haj' or pilgrimage to Mecca.
  - — Regular attendance at prayers, and compulsory attendance on Fridays when the Imam preaches after the noontime 'namaz' (Zafar ki namaz). The preaching is in the form of issuing a "fatwa".
  - — 'Ijma' or 'consensus' is not to be equated with public opinion. Rather, it is the consensus of the community based on what the scholars have decided - the mullahs therefore are the repositories of superior wisdom to which the

common man must have unquestioning obedience.

Islamisation of Kashmiris is aimed at drawing away Kashmiris from their ideology of 'Azadi' and Kashmiriyat. The alienation of the people only makes matters worse - it is slowly pushing the masses into the waiting arms of religion, which in turn is being projected as the last panacea for Kashmir. Undeniably, the on-going militancy has taken a heavy toll of the Kashmiri psyche. Societally, trauma induced stress is responsible for eroding the dignity of the common man. Paul Weiss describes this condition as 'idiocide' or 'death of self'. Such a mental situation occurs when there is a 'denial of status' and 'denial of stature'. The reader would recall a similar feeling within Bengali officers in the Pakistan Army, of being 'unequal', and the 'sub-human' position of Bangladeshis in erstwhile East Pakistan.

> "There is a denial of status when an individual is brought down or kept from the position he normally or rightfully occupies, turning him into a victim, a hostage, a prisoner, a neglected or alienated member of society, cut off from the opportunity to survive, to maintain a level already achieved, or even to grow - thereby making his promise meaningless .... Where a loss in status precludes the carrying out of the same role, a loss in stature affects an individual as a single unit. Indeed, every means of human destruction, from genocide to war, no matter what the occasion, excuse, explanation, or benefit, is

> inevitably idiocidal, radically reducing the stature of an individual, making him less than a human can be and should be".[13]

When in trouble or when mentally tormented, man invariably turns to religion for solace. People in this mental limbo are vulnerable, and what Pakistan is doing is simply exploiting the vulnerability of the Kashmiri psyche by misinterpreting religion. The threat of Islamic fundamentalism is live. The wolf is already at our doors, the ground indicators are all there and manifestly clear. Only many of us choose to close our eyes or look away in pious hope.

- The mosque is the basic politico-religious platform for espousing Islam and has now been used for spreading sedition. Friday congregations are well attended all over the Valley with Srinagar's Hazartbal and Jama Masjid as the religious flagships. An analysis of prayer meetings on Fridays is revealing:

Average time allocation of speeches:

. Anti-India propaganda	37%
. Preaching Islam	27%
. Prayer	36%

Themes of speeches:

. Azadi	50%
. Custodial killings and brutalities by security forces	21%
. In praise of militants as holy warriors of 'jehad'	18%
. Desecration of Muslim shrines	06%

Excessive militarisation of
the 'Border' (not Line of Control)05%

- Kashmir's pro-'Azadi' Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front has been effectively marginalised by the pro-Pakistan militant groups and more recently by the J and K Government. This is indicative of the crack-up of a 'nationalist liberation movement' under intense pressure from Islamic revivalism and its withering due to want of public sustenance. Today, apart from internal dissensions, the JKLF is politically and militarily irrelevant. This shift could not have come about against the wishes of the Kashmiris.
- The ethnic cleansing of 2,48,000 Kashmiri Pandits contained within it all the seeds of an ethno-religious movement, the like of which the world has witnessed in recent times in erstwhile Yugoslavia and Ruwanda. Had the Pandits dithered or delayed their departure from the Valley, they too would have suffered the cruel fate of Serbs and Muslim Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The eviction of the Pandits must also be viewed against the background of 97 Hindu temples being destroyed since 1990, a fact that has been underplayed in the overall interest of communal harmony and religious amity.
- After Hazratbal, Tsrar-e-Sharif is the holiest of Sufi shrines where Muslim devotees throng in their thousands to pray and offer their obeisance to the holy relics of Sheikh Nooruddin. When militants belonging to the Hizbul Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Ansar, under orders from Mast Gul, burned down the township and the shrine on the night of 8/9 and 10/11 May 1995, there was not

a whimper of protest from the people. Whatever anger was displayed was directed towards the Government. Tsrar-e-Sharif is a clear signal that deSufisation of Kashmiri society is well underway. It shows very clearly though sadly that the horrors of LIC do not arouse the ire of the people. The banality is that Kashmiris are coexisting with it all, even when their most venerable shrines and core values are violated. Luckily though, they reacted at the attempt of militants to tamper with the Holy relic of the Prophet's hair at Hazratbal in the spring of 1996.

- Phenomenal increase in the Islamic content in local papers, with about 40 per cent news space being devoted exclusively to Islam and connected issues.
- The Academy of Art, Culture and Language in Srinagar once used to be the hub of cultural activities. It now has a woe begone air and even the entrance is dilapidated.
- Widespread discussion on the concept of 'ummah'.
- Increase in use of 'burkha' among the otherwise emancipated Kashmiri women.
- Prior to 1990, plural marriages were unheard of. Now they are on the increase especially amongst the middle class.
- Hindu practices adopted by Sufism are on the way out.

'Madrassas' are religious seminaries attached to mosques. They are playing a key role in the Islamisation of the Kashmiri youth. These 'madrassas', - and there are about 150 of them, are the Jamaat's ideological Kalashnikovs. The indoctrinated children who pass out from these seminaries are the shock troops of Islam and potential recruits into the ranks of militancy.

As part of a deliberate policy to drive children away from liberal education, militants, with the tacit approval of the Jamaat-e-Islami, have torched 375 government run schools (176 Primary, 128 Middle and 71 Higher Secondary). At the same time and surely not by chance, the 'madrassas' have been reinforced by a substantial increase in the number of Jamaat-run schools (Falah-am Trust) as well as scholarships. Judged in relation to a base line of 1989, these Jamaat funded schools are up by 15.76 per cent with enrolment having increased by 24.3 per cent. This increase is to be viewed with reference to the demographical growth rate of 7.2 per cent from 1989 to 1997. Statistics reveal that the increase has been significant in South Kashmir:

District	*Number of Jamaat Schools*		*Increase %*
	1989	*1997*	
Anantnag	27	32	18.5
Pulwama	24	28	16.7
Badgam	18	21	16.6
Srinagar	19	22	15.8
Baramulla	29	32	10.3
Kupwara	24	28	16.7
	141	163	15.76 %

The 'madrassa' concept is based upon the belief that Islamic Revolution can succeed provided the 'ummah' is imbibed with high levels of Islamic consciousness. Children and persons upto the age of 20 are considered to be relatively uncontaminated from the corrupt culture and value system of non-

Muslim society. The 'madrassa' therefore is the best medium to not only catch them young but also to indoctrinate the youth. To give the reader an idea of how 'madrassa' teaching can be seditious, here is a passage from a textbook of class 3 in one of the seminaries:

> "We are Kashmiris and our country is Kashmir. It is surrounded by India, China and Pakistan".

'Madrassas' are on the increase; they are spawning the bacteria of Jamaatism. Regrettably, nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done to first recognise and then neutralise this threat. One sincerely hopes it will not be a familiar story of too little too late.

Facing upto the challenge of Islamic fundamentalism is no easy task. The need of the hour is for the Government to evolve a comprehensive and clear cut strategy to fight fundamentalism. Whatever is being done in the name of our 'information battle' is to put it mildly, disjointed and amateurish. The framework of the anti-fundamentalist strategy should encompass:

- A cogent strategy to prevent the rise and spread of Hindu fundamentalism in the rest of the country as a counter or reaction to Islamic fundamentalism.
- The continuation of a popular government in Srinagar. Any attempt, or even talk of political meddling and machinations will put the clock back by several years. It will revive the nightmare of Farooq-Gul Shah days.

- Revival of the moribund Administration with an efficient and humane face to de-alienate the public.
- Independent observers to monitor the progress of developmental projects in the districts to ensure utilisation rather than embezzlement of developmental funds.
- Instituting police reforms which are long overdue. The J and K Police is ill equipped, ill trained and not so well led. Their weaponary is outdated, anti-riot equipment is primitive, vehicular mobility is lacking and radio communications within districts leaves much to be desired. However, their spirit in the Hazratbal crisis in the spring of 1996 shows that all is not lost as far as the morale of the force is concerned.
- Revival of Sufism.
- A concerted drive to neutralise 'madrassas' and restore effective primary and secondary school education, with provision of physical security to both the buildings and the teachers.
- Involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in development projects as well as in the field of health, education, development of the border areas and environment. Srinagar is a stinking city and the beautiful Dal Lake is shrinking rapidly. This could be the starting point for environmentalists to first arrest and then turn the ecological tide.
- A massive economic package and setting up of industries for job opportunities. Induction of foreign capital would speed up matters.

Socio-Psycho Mechanisms

What are the psychological mechanisms and ideological controls that Jamaati fundamentalists are exercising over Kashmiris? These psychological insights into fundamentalist thinking are proof of the ruthless efficiency with which the Kashmiris are being targeted.

The first is the of Lack of Public Space, a concept developed by Hannah Arendt when seeking explanations for Nazi cruelty towards the Jews - cruelty perpetrated by perfectly normal people. Controls are exercised over day to day living, over political and Islamic beliefs and over public as well as private morals. Controls are in-built into Islam by exercising the Five Essentials and the right to holy war - 'jehad'. 'Jehad' sustains militancy as it is made out to be the only means to establish God's sovereignty on earth—Dar-ul-Islam. Non-Muslims are left with three choices: accept and embrace Islam, pay tribute or fight. Even behavioural rules are laid down by the Sharia for every conceivable situation, from jurisprudence to commerce to daily life.

Excessive controls to a degree are preventing the Kashmiris from independent thought - this is what is referred to as lack of public space. Kashmiri society today is clearly displaying its suffering from this malaise:

- A single personalised outlook of the world through the filter of Islam, the only religion that matters to the people. The focus of such a viewpoint is becoming stronger as Sufism is gradually being replaced by orthodox Sunni beliefs.

- The loss of critical judgement to be able to see the Government's point of view, as well as other nationalistic political parties including the National Conference.
- A fatalistic acceptance of one's condition and inability to do anything about putting an end to violence. Ultimately the people in a society must rise up against the abuse of political violence and terrorism. We see the helplessness of a population best described by Martin Luther King:

> "We shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people, but for the the appalling silence of the good people".

The concept of conspiracy is the second psychological mechanism being employed by fundamentalists. Through the medium of leaflets, the loud speakers in mosques, the vernacular Press and Pakistan TV, the fundamentalists are articulating the eternal fight of Good vs Evil along the lines of the concept of 'Na Khuda' or anti-Christ. Evil forces they claim are arrayed against Islam and there is a master conspiracy to subvert the Religion. The conspiracy themes do not restrict themselves to the Valley alone but are transnational:

- Indian culture is nothing else but decadent Western materialism: cheap, vulgar and consumeristic. There is a clear-cut attempt to try and destroy Islam by corrupting the Kashmiris with these misplaced ideals.
- Western values are secular and these norms have been deliberately implanted to create a religious divide. Consequently, socialism, democracy and secularism are anti-Islam.

- The West is determined to destroy the religion of Prophet Mohammed and history is full of examples: the Holy Crusades, support for Zionism, and moral and material help for Serb forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- Government after government in Delhi and Srinagar and their pseudo ideas of Western liberalism have made the poor poorer and the rich richer. It has even ushered moral decadance - AIDS, free sex, drugs and alcohol. This theme is quite akin to what Black Muslims in the USA are saying: "... morally this capitalist world stinks... we will destroy the Western world from within itself" (Farrakhan).
- Science, technology and the free market economy are being openly used for destructive purposes - to keep military-industrial complexes alive, to turn God-fearing people into defiant atheists, to worship Money and not God.

The conspiracy theory continues: why, despite a devout Muslim observing all the rules of daily life, he is still hungry, miserable and deprived? How can this happen if one prays to Allah five times a day and leads a life full of virtues? This is all happening because non-Muslims and Hindus (specifically singled out) have a master conspiracy to entice, entrap and destroy all the good Islam stands for. The hypothesis concludes that Islam and Islam alone can fight the conspiracy and usher in a new order - an Islamic Order.

Kashmir as a Human Rights issue is the second strategic objective of Pakistan's information war. At the operating plane, Pakistan's Human Rights crusade is predominantly led by the Jamaatis who control a sizeable section of the Vernacular Media, their own vocal cadres and pseudo Human Rights' groups. False allegations, provoking security forces to over-react, stage managed protests, poster campaigns and attributing killings of prominent Kashmiris to the 'hand of Indian intelligence agencies' are favourite tactics. Having failed to beat India diplomatically, Islamabad is cleverly manipulating Kashmir into a Human Rights "disaster scenario". The aim of the exercise is to continue driving a wedge between India and the Kashmiris to achieve greater alienation, to lower the morale of the security forces and to marshal hostile public opinion, both domestic and international. This lobby, by and large turns a Nelsonian eye to the militants record of violation of Human Rights.

Pakistan and militant organisations have been employing conventional and unconventional media with fair effect to malign the image of the security forces and keep the "pot boiling". Although galling, the fact is that apart from a few odd successes, we need to do a lot more to fight this vital information battle. A look into the triangular correlationship between the media, the military and militancy will give a host of clues.

References

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8

Media, Military and Militancy

"If mass media did not exist, terrorists would have to invent it"

Dr Fredrick Hacker

The title of this chapter would suggest that the State Administration has little or no role in this exercise. The assumption is largely valid because regrettably the Department of Information in Srinagar has been marginalised and the mantle of fighting the information war has fallen upon the shoulders of the Army and the Border Security Force (BSF). Apart from reasons of inadequate media-support, lack of infrastructure and environmental conditions, the primary reason for non-performance can be attributed to lack of awareness of the vital and basic fact that, in LIC winning the information war is more important than killing the militant. J & K has two experienced media handlers, Ram Mohan Rao and Dr Nazki, the Station Director of Srinagar

Doordarshan and All India Radio. Both have vast experience but have been unable to utilise their full potential.

Terror is all about terrorizing society and media provides the oxygen of publicity - attention fans the flames. The essence of terror lies in zooming everyone's attention to the bigger issues at hand; more the blood, bigger the headlines. In the philosophy of terrorism, a scared mind is a vulnerable mind. Therefore, people are more receptive when militants speak with action rather than with words. To think that militants propagandise only by the use of the gun is far from true. Militants, under guidance from their political mentors, have worked out specific media goals and a publicity strategy along well-thought out and scientific lines. Such orchestration must be taken into account when we plan and fight the information battle.

Over the years, the National Media has matured and is increasingly playing a fairly responsible role in fighting militancy (not militants). More of this later. There have however been media hiccups and Tsrar-e-Sharif is a glaring example. Prior to 10 March, 1995, the Hurriyat leaders visited the town and Mast Gul delivered fiery speeches from the steps of the shrine. The atmosphere was charged with emotions, anti-India slogans rent the air and victory signs were given by local pro-Pakistan politicians. The hype was unbearable and the media went hysterical. It was 'masala'(spice) all the way, and unable to resist the sensationalism, the media especially TV journalists, over-reacted. Media hype plus irresponsible reporting was like mixing nitrogen and glycerine. It literally pushed the nervous

Administration into taking the regrettable decision of banning further media entry into the town. The militant was thus free to do what he pleased including destroying the shrine. But Tsrar-e-Sharif is an aberration; it does not detract from the high quality news covered by the national media.

The Vernacular Press in Srinagar is an oddity the like of which has never been experienced before in any conflict situation. The author, as the Brigadier General Staff of 15 Corps, had first hand experience of interacting with the media. The experience defies all lessons in media relations and therefore its characterstics need special attention.

1. The media is allergic to the uniform and resistant to 'management'. From the point of view of the mediamen this reaction is quite understandable. Although most of the journalists are not with India, but when taken into confidence, local journalists always reacted favourably. The author never felt let down or had his confidence betrayed. Mediamen have their compulsions and they need attention. These two aspects must be understood. Whenever ignored or distanced it is only natural that problems of distrust and suspicion raise their head. It is also true that at times the local mediamen have been treated as 'pariahs'. This must never happen because the Vernacular Press is more important than all other media since they are the opinion makers for the local people. We ignore them at our peril. Presently, our attention bias is heavily tilted in favour of the International media and then the English national press. We need to redress this imbalance.

2. Lack of professionalism amongst Urdu journalists and stringers. In Kashmir, one of the easiest professions to pick up apart from being a militant, is to work for a local rag. If one is a bit lucky, becoming a stringer for a foreign TV news agency or newspaper is always a distinct possibilty. Stringers are paid well and in hard currency. Collective earnings of a successful journalist-cum-stringer can range from Rs 50,000/- to Rs 1,00,000/- per month.

3. The media is unclear about its role in militancy. If anything, it is blatantly seditious and anti-India. *Kashmir Times*, published from Jammu is excluded from this category. Its managing director and owner, Ved Bhasin is a responsible journalist and the paper is balanced in coverage and reporting and adheres to journalistic norms. But the rest have only one aim - everything about India is evil, everything about Islam (and to some by inference about Pakistan) is good. No self respecting country - be it a liberal democracy or dictatorship would permit such sedition.

   We not only allow these papers to print what is tantamount to treason, we offer them newsprint at subsidised rates and send in government sponsored advertisements. This media is more free and more irresponsible than any other media elsewhere in the world. This media continues to be the mouthpiece of militant organisations and defiantly abuses the freedom of the press enshrined in our Constitution. Freedom is indeed laudable but the line needs to be drawn somewhere. A government that permits such licence in the garb of freedom is seen to be ineffective and weak-kneed, a perception that does not do any good to India's strategy in the information war. Enough should be enough.

4. In the information age and particularly in a LIC environment, it is downright simplistic to think that formal controls can be both put in place and later used to discipline the media. It is also naive to think that the information war can be won in the face of an unsympathetic media, particularly with a hostile local press. To do so, is to find oneself in a no-win situation. Censorship in a conventional war is often desirable and is implementable as well, given the short duration of most present day wars. But in a conflict situation within the country it is both undesirable and unenforceable. Any attempt at censorship would be both anti-democratic and counter-productive. The price for banning media as it turned out at Tsrar-e-Sharif, can be damaging to the credibility of the Government as well as to the honourable image of the security forces. Banning or restricting the media deepens alienation. In our democracy, every Indian has a right to know what is happening within the country and this freedom cannot be denied.

Themes in Pakistani Psychological Campaign

There is a convergence between the psychological goals of the militants and the psychological themes being put across by Pakistan. In Kashmir, Pakistan has selected three targets: the people, the citizens of the rest of India and the international community. To each target audience, the themes are customised:

- *To Kashmiris.* The entire Western and Islamic world supports your movement for self-determination. We will continue to provide you moral and material support. (Interestingly enough, Pakistan does not talk of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan or of the right of self determination in the so-called Azad Kashmir—Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).
- *To the Citizen of India.* You have no business to be in Kashmir as the people in the Valley are against your governance. Even the world community reminds you of not having kept up your promise to give Kashmiris their right of self-determination. You must also know that your security forces are brutal; their actions and record of human rights do not enhance your prestige.
- *To the Security Forces.* Indian leadership is divided over the future of Kashmir and the Centre and State do not see eye to eye. Consequently, politicians in Delhi are exploiting the security forces for their selfish ends. Even the State Police is not with the Central Reserve Police and the Border Security Forces.
- *To the International Community and the Muslim 'Ummah'.*
  - — Muslims constitute 13 per cent of India's population, yet only 1 per cent find employment in government service. Muslims are 'second class citizens and despite five

decades of Independence they are still uneducated and constitue a large part of the lumpen. The cry for Hindutva, the storming of the Golden Temple, the demolition of Babri Masjid and burning down of the town and shrine at Tsrar-e-Sharif are proof of Hindu bigotry and intolerance.

— There are 6,00,000 troops in Kashmir, an Occupation Army that is determined to crush the local populace and stamp out their culture. The Kashmiris are being alienated by the brutality of the security forces; women, children and the infirm, none are spared. India is hiding its atrocities by disallowing internationally renowned Human Rights groups like Amnesty International or International Red Cross from visiting the Valley. (Fortunately there has been a change in the last named situation).

— Indian security forces are suffering heavy casualties at the hands of the militants. These details are not published by the Government since it will be both a national embarrassment as well as a valid reason for the troops to feel demoralised. The morale of Indian troops in Kashmir has been seriously degraded despite the Government's attempts to hide its casualty figures.

Pakistan is cleverly orchestrating every available means to disseminate its disinformation campaign. These include:

- Sada-i-Hurriat is a clandestine Radio that was set up in 1991 to beam a doctored and suitably coloured version of events in the Valley, and to exhort Kashmiris to continue their struggle for self-determination. There are scores of other clandestine radio stations that are operating from Indian soil. Pakistan also broadcasts distorted versions of the history of Partition. The following programmes are popular:

Vasal (A Devout Muslim)

Jal Raha Hai Kashmir (Kashmir is Burning)

Kashmir Dastan (Story of Kashmir)

The Killing Fields of Kashmir (there is a TV version also based on juxtaposition of Indian footage)

Kashmir Banega Pakistan (Kashmir will become Pakistan)

Muqadama-e-Kashmir (The case of Kashmir)

- Video tapes showing funerals of 'martyrs' especially 'guest' militants, alleged Human Rights violations by the Indian security forces and investigative reports by Human Rights activists.
- 15-20 per cent of Pakistan Television (PTV) news is generally devoted exclusively to Kashmir (Doordarshan to note). Programmes on Kashmir are shown at 6.50 pm, 7.30 pm and 10.10 pm (prime time) unlike the Kashmir File telecast (since stopped) on Saturday in the morning slot of Doordarshan Channel 1.
- Pakistani print media devotes 8 to 10 per cent of published space to news on militancy and the 'holy war' in Kashmir. The attention given by the Indian media is miniscule and pale in comparison.
- Glossy posters, leaflets and propaganda material are smuggled into India and find their way into the Valley.

Psychological Media Goals of Militants

Militants are skilled manipulators of media having perfected the art by practice. The principle objective of armed propaganda is to control the Kashmiri people and win over their minds. To do so, the population must constantly be reminded that the militant exists and that the political goal of 'Azadi' is not too far off.

> "The destruction of a troop transport truck is more effective propaganda for the local population than a hundred speeches".[14]
>
> Regis Debray

Violence and terror are the best medium to get this gory message across over television screens, magazines and newspapers. The media helps in projecting an aura of omnipotence to the militant and lends him a new pseudo identity (at times a Robin Hood image, a la Mast Gul):

> "....the publicity provided through interviews has the effect of putting the terrorists on equal footing with the Government officials... This type of legitimation is another desire of those engaged in such violence .... Moreover, interviews and the publication of statements and demands often provide terrorists unedited access to the media that makes the media handmaidens to propaganda efforts. Other groups operating within the normal constraints of society do not enjoy

> the opportunity of unfettered access to the public via the media".[15]

All 'tanzeems' have a senior and experienced militant-cum-ideologue as their PR representative. He manages the information battle along given broad guidelines. Although there is no printed strategy on militant media objectives, a distinct pattern has emerged. Broadly they have the following five goals:

1. *Alienation.* The primary psychological goal of the militants is to create an environment wherein all Kashmiris continue to nurse a deep sense of hurt and alienation, instil a sense of betrayal in Kashmiris, project the Indian Government as having let down Kashmiris and brand Indians as aggressors, tormentors, corrupt and fanatic Hindus. The goals also aim to create a sense of slavery and bondage amongst the locals, project militants as 'freedom fighters', holy warriors and martyrs.
2. *Fundamentalisation* of the Kashmir Issue and Islamisation of Kashmiris by creating a band of 'holy warriors', and uniting the masses under the holy flag of 'jehad' and the concept of 'ummah'.
3. *Generate* awareness that Kashmiris have a separate identity of their own - 'Kashmiriyat', a label which is alien to Indian culture.
4. *Demoralise* the security forces and Government. "The war of nerves is an aggressive strategy, in which information, spread by the mass media and orally, is meant to demoralise the government'.[16]

The Kashmiri local media is the info-weapon that is intended for bruising the psyche of the security forces. Daily publication of gory accounts of Human Rights being violated, propaganda and disinformation are designed to create doubts in the mind of a soldier, especially when he is exposed to this environment for periods as long as three years. Generally, the troops rationalise and conclude, " All right, even if 10 per cent is correct, we certainly are not upright". This reaction is on desired lines and is exactly how the militants are attempting to erode the fighting will of the security forces and in turn the Government. This is part of the strategy that is described as "death by a thousand cuts". The self doubt is a deep cut indeed. However, the good news is that the fallout of such adverse and false propaganda is being effectively checked at unit level by keeping the soldiers situationally aware and mentally robust. Detailed and regular briefings by the officers and a fortnightly newsletter 'Vadi Patrika' issued from the Corps Headquarters have been effective in checkmating this insidious attack.

5. *Psychological Wearing Down.* Militant media managers genuinely believe that the cumulative effect of demoralisation will affect the political and military psyche of the nation. Militants manipulate media in the hope that, the security forces will soon start believing that, the struggle is not worth fighting for or for laying down one's life. His propaganda campaign is attempting to extract from the security forces a psychological defeat. Their

game lies in continuously attacking soldiers and inflicting high rates of attrition through the strategy of "death by a thousand cuts", thereby hoping that sooner or later the military and political resilience will crumble. Along similar lines, the IRA terrorist, Mc Guire, stated the aim of the IRA as:

> "..... to kill thirty six British soldiers ... the same number who died in Aden. The target was reached in early Novermber 1971. But this, Army Council felt, was not enough. I remember Dave, amongst others, saying : "We've got to get eighty". Once eighty had been killed, the pressure on the British to negotiate would be immense. I remember the feeling of satisfaction we had at hearing another one had died. As it happened, the total killed by the time of the truce in June 1973 was 102".[17]

Militants are expecting that psychological pressure on the Government, the people and the security forces will become so intolerable that, one day India will throw in the towel. "Enough is enough .... we have to leave". Americans in Vietnam and Soviets in Afghanistan experienced similar thoughts and reacted on predicted lines.

Publicity Strategy of Militants

Tactics of publicity combines a mix of sophisticated and covert actions. To achieve their psychological goals, militants have adopted an aggressive publicity strategy:

1. *Intimidation* and subversion of the Valley media. The Valley media is the mouthpiece of the militants but is more intimidated than subverted. The media publishes pro-militant versions, blotting out facts and conducting an effective disinformation campaign. The author analysed two such Valley based papers; *Greater Kashmir,* an English daily, and the popular Urdu paper *Al-Safa.* The allocation of space to various themes is illustrative of their heavy anti-India and pro-militant bias.

	Greater Kashmir (%)	*Al-Safa (%)*
Islamic Content	21	04
Pro-militancy	19	42
Other news	07	02
Advertisement	43	40
Miscellaneous (short stories, puzzles, letters to the editor, etc).	10	12

Use of journalists as mediators is common practice. Journalists have perforce been rendered one of the few remaining open channels of communication between the militants and the Administration. While the entire state machinery of J&K was frantically trying to locate him, 'Mast Gul' summoned some local scribes and gave an interview after the Tsrar crisis. Media persons also act as guides for foreign press parties to enable them to contact and interview militants. Most of the interviews and display of arms are stage managed, with fixed charges for staging different acts.

2. *False Allegations.* Security forces are continuously blamed for atrocities. Charges levelled include those of looting, killing, custodial deaths, rape, torching and other human rights violations. However, there is never a mention of excesses by the militants. At best, when confronted by overwhelming evidence, the like of Professor Gani will say : "They are only boys, and boys will be boys".
3. *Highlight 'achievements' of militants.* Militants are projected as a strong and heroic force inflicting very heavy casualties on the security forces, and therefore casualty figures are liberally exaggerated. To add authenticity, militant groups claim responsibility for all high publicity incidents. Although the 29 March 1994, bomb blast in Badami Bagh Cantonment which killed 13 persons was purely an accident, the Hizbul Mujahideen was quick to claim responsibility for having set off the blast.
4. *Sedition.* Articles and reports are seditious and tend to distort history, cleverly manipulating events in the past in order to influence the masses, especially the youth. And the media lionises the militants. For all intents and purposes, the history of Kashmir begins in 1947, everything else in the preceding 16 centuries before is dismissed as a bad dream. Hinduism, Buddhism, Shaivism and Sufism are all blanked out for convenience.
5. *Islamic Values.* With a steady and distinct rise in the Islamic content in local newspapers, Islamic fundamentalist values are propagated and extensive coverage given to international

events wherever Muslims are involved e.g. Bosnia. The virtues of 'jehad' are extolled, and Indian excesses on its Muslim population highlighted. There is also a determined attempt to make Kashmiris forget their roots of Kashmiriyat and Sufism, and in this regard some success has been achieved.

6. *International Support.* Some local newspapers are funded and subscribed to by certain Middle East countries. Hence, the use of this important medium to gain sympathy and support of such countries. Copies are mailed to civil liberty groups, foreign embassies in Delhi and Islamic institutions all over the world.

Our Media Strategy

Where is the strategy?

What are the answers?

Disciplining the media is out of question. Any attempt in this direction is playing into the hands of militants and antagonizing the Kashmiris as well as the media. In theory, the State Department of Information should evolve and orchestrate an integrated media policy. Regrettably, this organisation needs to be propped up and supported till it is able to stand on its feet effectively. Until then the Army continues to be the only institution possessing the infrastructure and the acceptable expertise (in relative terms) to cooperate with the media - all types of media. Apart from laying down broad guidelines which must encompass the essence of our national media strategy (if there be one), the day to day interaction should be decentralised down to divisions and even brigades. Centralised control is just counter-productive. Being remote we will invariably be reacting. In the battle, the side that moves first wins. Likewise, in the information war, the side that gets the story in first, is the side that wins. The answer lies in better media awareness among Army officers, and closer and freer interaction with media persons. The Army needs training and professional expertise right down to unit level in how to handle information and interact with the media. The Army also needs to open up its notions on the concept of cast-iron security. The penalty of openness vis a vis tight control will be far less in the long run. Hiccups will be there but they are infinitely easier to manage than the adverse effects of a closed-door policy.

In a liberal democratic State like India with a large and vibrant press and multi media, controls over the media are difficult, if not impossible. Censorship can neither be imposed nor enforced and no formal agreement on "voluntary restraint" is possible - informally yes, but in selective cases only. As a result, 'media management' is a dirty label and understandably, anathema to the media. Even if 'management' was a possibility, since Government is party to the conflict, State controls would seem unfair to the people whom the Government is trying to win back. If media is to be used as a force multiplier in fighting militancy, "cooperation" will have to be the one and only strategy. Only through cooperation will it be possible to achieve and later enlarge a degree of "voluntary restraint". Confrontation only back-fires. We cannot hope to win the hearts and minds in the face of a hostile or even indifferent media. Indirectly, by improving relations with the media, the goodwill and cooperation of the public is also gained. The reverse equally holds true. As people are won over, there will be a corresponding decrease in media hostility. Media cooperation and de-alienation of the people should therefore be the core themes of our media strategy.

Cooperation with the media is possible provided the military improves its understanding of the emerging media environment, particularly the following aspects:

1. That there is no such thing as niche information. Compartmentalising information into command information, public information or niche group information is becoming blurred by the day. Consequently, information campaigns must be directed at all groups, be they friendly, neutral or hostile.
2. The advanced Western democracies have a Freedom Information Act. Even in India the age of transparency has already arrived. Keeping secrets is no longer possible. Information is leaked out by even friendly agencies in conflict with each other's interests. Inspired leaks to the National Media, are proof of how information ultimately reaches the people. Information, like water, seeks its own course. Nixon learnt it a bit late in the Watergate episode.
3. Modern communication is instant and real-time. Take STD for example. A bomb explodes at the main gate of the Corps

Headquarters, and before the Corps Commander gets the first detailed report, a stringer has dialled BBC External Services in Bush House, London, giving them an eye-witness account of the incident with his comments.

4. Information released to the Press in the daily briefings should be credible. Denying factual information especially when it concerns the public is denying the public its right to know.
5. Kashmiris have every right to know about the Army's policy and position on every issue, be it the 'Amarnath Yatra', 'Tsrar-e-Sharif', 'Hostage Taking' or 'Political Process'. In fact, the Army must proactively share this information regularly in order to earn the confidence of the local population and the nation as well.

Information support objectives in Kashmir are overdue. Tactically, the information strategy must weaken the militants and isolate them while at the same time winning over the people. Information objectives must also aim at keeping the nation informed and instilling confidence within the troops.

What are the Impediments in Achieving our Information Strategy?

Although the Government and the Army in particular are seriously going about educating civil servants and service officers in media, there is still a long way to go in grasping the full power and potential of information, especially the information environment of the 21st Century. This is the first impediment.

1. In the emerging global village therefore, information ought to be both a principle of war and of conflict resolution. This puts paid to Mao's belief that political power comes out of the barrel of a gun to which theory a large number of people have also subscribed. With the empowerment of the individual, power now vests in the people. It is people's power, now more than ever before, that's what will determine their destiny. LIC in Kashmir and elsewhere in the country is therefore more political, less military - the centre of gravity has already shifted.
2. The emerging information environment is shaping a new universal morality, for in a global village, information is no longer geographical. It is neither Indian, Pakistani or American. Information is rapidly acquiring a new culturally neutral identity and a new morality as well. Those who inhabit the global village must lose their cultural and civilizational identity - a price for membership. Indian and foreign correspondents in Srinagar are showing the first symptoms of this new morality being pursued vigorously by the country's free market approach. One critical point that has not been grasped by media handlers is a live reality: new media morality does not respect old social and professional taboos and national borders like their predecessors in the industrial age.
3. There is a new morality in our society also, being pushed forward and sponsored by mass

media. Undoubtedly, this is affecting and shaping the vision of the youth, and soldiers cannot be exceptions. These visions are not national; these are personal visions, visions of betterment in material terms and common to all religions and society. It is therefore, unreasonable to expect media and other information systems to be fired by patriotism. If they are; be happy. If they are not; don't be disappointed. What now ultimately matters is money - money before God, money before nation, money before self. The new God is Money and the new Temple is the Citi Bank. This is the hard reality we must learn to cope with, no point in either ignoring or in passing value judgement on it.

4. The people who receive information are individualistic in character, and they deeply resent any form of control over information. Information is now a commodity. Consequently, in the information age particularly, government controlled media lacks credibility. This is why All India Radio and Doordarshan continue to be disbelieved in the Valley and their impact blunted. At times they lack credibility even in official circles. The answer lies in Government using a neutral agency to get its message across. Coverage can be subtly choreographed without making the 'other agency' feel it is being used.
5. With each passing day, Indian media is becoming more competitive and consumeristic; and perforce more investigative, with greater quantum of analysis, critique and commentary by professionals. This media is also asking

more questions than ever before. We have to shut up or put up with it. Where does this all lead to? Willy-nilly, we are witnessing the emergence of a fair number of academics, politicians in the opposition and experts. Those engaged in fighting the militants perceive them to be 'ganging-up' against the Government. In the battle for public opinion, greater confrontation lies ahead: people vs the military and people vs the Government, with media batting on the side of the people. Old 5-day-test cricket tactics will not do; players now need a new match temperament since instant reporting and live coverage have reduced the attention span of the viewer. In this new time capsule, tactical victories can be made out to be strategic failures or vice versa.

The second impediment is lack of openness in sharing information about policy in a given situation, alleged Human Rights violations, punishments to those found guilty and casualties to own forces. Without being over-specific or giving out identities, it is possible to share factual information with the media thereby gaining the confidence of the people. Our entire attitude about holding back information is a colonial hang-over - a spill over of the "official secrets mentality". The damage to credibility is incalculable. Only through greater decentralisation in media cooperation will the situation swing firmly in favour of the Government and the security forces. It will not be out of place to mention that at times handling the media has been easier than dealing with the "hierarchy"!

The third impediment lies in media managers being unable to differentiate between the role and use of media in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. Counter-terrorism scenarios relate to specific situations which require specific responses e.g. a hostage or hijack drama. Since they are basically military situations and in an atmosphere of heightened tension, the success of security operations depends a lot on information controls. On the other hand, counter-insurgency is a political problem and affects everyone in society. As opposed to counter-terrorism, it requires less controls over information; only then can any headway be made in winning the battle of hearts and minds. Tight controls such as banning media from entry in a particular area leads to bizarre reporting. It happened at Tsrar-e-Sharif when some responsible papers reported that Army helicopters flew over the town spraying the shrine with inflammatory powder before setting it on fire. Why do security forces often get worked up over media consumerism and sensationalism? Unless and until they rid themselves of such over-reactions, they will become reactive and in the bargain lose the information war. News is like any consumer commodity and people are hungry for sensationalism! Media caters to the taste of the readership and Government and the security forces must appreciate what therefore makes good copy. They need to come to terms with this fact of life as well as understand the psychological effect of news.

The fourth impediment lies in at first not appreciating the fact that acts of terrorism have high news value, and then subsequently over-reacting. Terror is the best advertisement:

1. Bad news is good news; and good news is boring.

> "...the media are the terrorist's best friend".
>
> Walter Laquer

> "... terrorism is a creature of the media".
>
> R Friendlander

2. The reader feels it could happen to him and therefore identifies himself with the victim of the terrorist attack. Alternatively, the reader may identify with the terrorist, or with victims of the alleged brutality of security forces and Governmental coercion or exploitation.
3. Terror is theatrical and dramatic. It involves human suffering, a staple of drama themes.
4. Political repercussions and moral dilemmas arising out of terrorist acts are intense.

Effects of media-portrayed acts of violence on society are considerable. These include:

1. "Terrorism is aimed at people watching television. Television declares who is important and who has an identity. Terrorists have found that the world road to identity is to do something violent. This becomes causation and the sole justification for many terrorist activities giving them exactly what they want and thats' power."[18]

   D Lopez

> "We in the Irish state regard the appearance of terrorists on television as an incitement to murder. The incitement is addressed not so much to the general

public as to other terrorists and potential terrorists".[19]

Lour Crises O'Brien

2. Fear and insecurity are instilled into the population raising anxiety levels within the common man.
3. Disgust with the Government for not being able to do anything positive and appearing powerless.
4. People are constantly reminded that the Government has outstanding issues to resolve.
5. Terror arouses frustration and anger in the minds of security forces as well.

Does Media have any Responsibility in Fighting Militancy?

Every journalist says yes. What is the role of media in a militancy situation? Media is the Fourth Estate and has a proactive role in dealing with militancy. The national media requires to do a lot of soul searching as perception of its role and obligations in Kashmir appear to be ill defined and hazy. Media needs to consider the following roles:

1. Mobilise public opinion and perceptions against violence. Towards this aim, the media ought to open debates for assessing achievements of militancy while playing down the glamour and cult of terrorism.
2. Act as a citizens' watchdog on human rights

violations by soldiers as well as militants, by articulating upon and informing about the aspirations of the masses.

3. Prevent misuse of the media by militants.
4. Discharge its obligation to keep the people informed of the factual ground situation.
5. Maintain civilian morale and the nation's commitment to Kashmir.
6. Pressurise the Government, Kashmiris and the militants to arrive at a conciliatory political meeting point.

Should broadcasting and print media organisations set for themselves guidelines and codes of reporting and programming for coverage under general journalistic principles (whatever these may mean)?

1. Although journalists could differ on the need for written codes of conduct, reporting 'codes' and 'ethics' are essential. A good media person is one who follows journalistic ethics, and is fairly objective; he or she does not need a booklet to make him or her a better professional. After all, even the military does not possess a written honour code; everything flows out from its ethos and from custom and tradition.
2. Objective reporting does not lead to national interests being jeopardised. In today's age of transparency it is difficult to suppress facts. Information is neutral. If one paper does not publish it, the other will. Half truths or lies will only deny the public's right to know and lead to erosion of credibility.
3. Editors in particular should visit the Valley

frequently to get a feel of the ambience and ground situation. A few leading papers, TV companies and magazines have been sponsoring 'green horns'. Seasoned and responsible journalists, once they overcome their hesitation in going to a "danger area", will be contributing appreciably in winning the confidence of the military and administration.

And finally, a few words on media education for the security forces.

1. Openness is the first lesson - openness in prompt and factual reporting of incidents, sharing of information regarding casualties and on punishments for soldiers violating Human Rights. Some information could perforce be given in confidence and "off the record". Editors and senior correspondents should be regularly briefed along these lines both at South Block in New Delhi and the Corps Headquarters in Srinagar.
2. The authority to interact with media persons should be delegated down to divisions and in some cases even to brigades and battalions. Any delay in meeting and interacting with correspondents simply because official sanction has not been received, militates against openness. A few military commanders will create faux pas but in the overall info battle, the open stance of the security forces will ultimately inspire confidence. This is a small price to pay in winning the information war.
3. Media briefings should be delegated down to unit commanders. In the upside-down world of mass communications, the lower the rank,

the higher the credibility. A soldier's account of an incident is believed more than what the General says. LIC is a platoon commander's war, and it is at the platoon level that the information war has also got to be fought (and won). Media education for the troops fighting the proxy war must begin at the level of junior commissioned officers (warrant officers) and non-commissioned officers. The training capsule should be practical and form part of the pre-induction training of a battalion/unit.

4. Media training within units will be facilitated, if selected regimental officers and junior commissioned officers are put through a 'unit media course' under Army and BSF arrangements. From among those qualified, one could be nominated as the Unit Information Officer (UIO) - the Public Relations Officers (PRO's) counterpart at the unit level. The role of the UIO should not be confined exclusively to media handling; he should also be a community relations officer. The need of the hour is to have professionals handling information right down to battalion level; the days of amateurism were over long back. UIOs will also be able to organise and oversee media education and training within units.
5. Education is all about awareness. The Army has made a good start in its training establishments but a lot more needs to be done at the operating level.

A broad assessment on the role of the national media (excluding All India Radio and Doordarshan) merits attention. For one who was interacting very closely with all sections of the media, the author has nothing but praise. Considering that they maintain a fairly objective stance in the face of warring sides, often in situations where their very lives are at risk, the achievements of the national media are laudable. Resultantly, the Fourth Estate has earned the combined respect of the soldier (at times a trifle grudgingly), of the militant and of the people.

The media balance-sheet - assets and liabilities speaks for itself:

1. The Press Council of India and the Editors' Guild are organisations that lack teeth. They have failed to discipline irresponsible coverage and enforce worthwhile formalistic ethics and are considered by most journalists as mere talking shops; their role needs to be reviewed.
2. Indian journalists (includes TV) are upper status, well educated, secular, patriotic and imbued with fairly good comprehension of the complex political conundrum in 'Kashmir'. The great majority can be described as left-of-centre in their political stance. These journalists are mostly in their 30s and maintain the confidentiality of information that is shared with them. In lighter vein, women correspondents, the like of Tavleen Singh, Harinder Baweja, Aasha Khosa, Alpana Kishore and Shiraz Sidhwa maintain better confidentiality than their male counterparts! They are serious, no-nonsense women, committed to their profession, to the mission in hand and are very professional.
3. Although decidedly very mature, the national media does consider news to be a commercial business, an economic enterprise. Consequently,

good news is bad news; no news is also bad news and bad news is good news. In a programme broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in February 1979, editors defined news as:

"News is the unusual. It is the unusual which will attract people's interests, attract people's attention. News is not what other people want to be published nor as some people cynically put it, is news what people don't want to be published".

William Deedes, Editor
The Daily Telegraph

"... It is a combination of gossip, of fact, of information. It is the exceptional".

Alan Protheroe, Editior
BBC TV News

"... News is something that somebody doesn't want you to print; all the rest is propaganda".[20]

David Nicholas, Editor ITN

4. The national media has its share of young and inexperienced journalists as well. Fortunately, their number is low. Although the media market in the country is exploding and drawing entrepreneurs to its ranks, serious magazines and TV companies cannot afford to send 'recruits' into a conflict zone without professional hardening. Television journalism is more difficult to handle. What matters is the use or abuse of the power of the camera -

what themes and messages the lens projects on the mind of the viewer. TV journalists are therefore required to be a combination of good film directors and good journalists. This profession cannot be mastered by on-the-job training; some formal instruction is required. This is a lucrative market which our media moghuls could explore and institutionalise.

5. Magazine journalism has done better than all other forms of media, and the author would like to single out *India Today* and *Sunday* for special mention. Write-ups on Kashmir are generally balanced, incisive and informative. Consequently, they are better opinion makers than the other print media.
6. Ground perception in reporting is essential. Here too, magazine journalists keep frequenting the Valley and are in the know of political cross-currents and public attitudes. This is not true in the case of big newspaper houses - they are Delhi-centric. Their focus must shift to Srinagar. The one and only exception is a brave Kashmiri Pandit woman - Aasha Khosa (*Indian Express*) who continues to live in Srinagar, defying the militant's gun. I sincerely hope the country honours her, if for nothing else, at least for her guts.
7. The Urdu Press in India like *Siyasat, Hind Samachar and Kaumi Awaaz* is secular. There is no evidence or reason to even suggest that they support Muslims only. Unfortunately their involvement in coverage of Kashmir is minimal, quite likely by sheer default. The Urdu Press, with its wide Muslim readership can play a pivotal role in fighting this brand of Islamic

fundamentalism in the Valley and elsewhere in the country.

8. An institution is judged by its performance. If impartiality, building up public opinion and acting as a watchdog over authority are what is expected from the media, then Indian media comes out with flying colours.

International media reporting lacks depth and has a positive bias which comes out very subtly as in the case of BBC, and more openly in the American Press. The Pakistani Press and most of the Islamic Press do not even pretend to have a neutral stance. They are engaged and not merely interested parties!

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9

The Information Battle-Extracts from a Diary

20 December 1993

..... from the last two months it is quite clear that there are two battle winning factors; good quality intelligence and close rapport with the local media .... The local media are branded as subverted and intimidated and are therefore treated as pariahs. We have no contact with them, but this estrangement is not going to help us in the long run.

05 January 1994

Soon after taking over as Brigadier General Staff, decided to handle media personally ..... In low intensity conflict situations, the senior most General Staff Officer is best suited to interact with media ..... after all this is a key result area, an essential element of our counter-militant strategy.

Unlike as in other armies where PROs are officers in the fast lane, ours are those put out to "pasture". In the British Army, Director of Public

Relations (DPR) is usually a CGS in the making. When will we see matching calibre in Indian Army PROs.

Media management in LIC is too serious and too important a function to be left to PROs only. PROs can assist, they cannot substitue the General Staff Officer.

10 February 1994

General Paddy gave the go-ahead for the first ever media workshop .... lasted 3 days. He is clear headed and all for openness and decentralisation; will always hold your hand. He is a General of the information age, I remember him telling me that the military man of the 21st Century will not be an armoured soldier; he will be the Intelligence Man! Capped it with a press briefing. Despite the snow and cold the exercise has been a thumping success. Belligerance has come down. We cannot win the hearts and minds battle by flying in the face of the local media. To do so is to display a complete lack of understanding of human psychology.

14 February 1994

Editors of all the local papers were summoned by the Jamaat and reprimanded for fraternising with the Army. A ban on publication for 10 days has been imposed!

28 February 1994

Our strategy is to basically moderate the strident tone of the local media. We can't expect to control them to be pro-Army or pro-Government, but they should not be outright pro-militant. I don't even mind their "India-bashing" columns. They have to do that to stay in business. The mood of the Vernacular Press will change once the mood of the public swings. It is a question of time - 'when' and not 'if'. It is essential first to turn them to a neutral stance from the present one of open and complete hostility.

04 April 1994

The accidental blast in 2 Field Ordinance Depot (FOD) on 29 March killed Major General EW Fernandes, Director General of Military Intelligence (DGMI) designate, and another twelve officers and men including Colonel Bansal, my Colonel General Staff (Intelligence). The official release we put out read "... fire followed by an explosion and there were some casualties.... however, the fire was brought under control..." Doordarshan in its evening news bulletin announced that 13 army personnel had been killed and seven injured. Next day, *Times of India* brought out a piece by Dinesh Kumar (who was present in Badami Bagh Cantonment at the time of the blast) giving accurate and complete details of the incident.

Media handling must take into account two factors:

1. You can't conceal the truth. Being vague doesn't help. You lose credibility. The truth will come out in any case. Today nothing can be hidden from the media. Being tight lipped only fuels wild rumours and suspicion. Therefore transparency will prove more rewarding.
2. We all know how to handle good news, very few know how to manage bad news. Under

such circumstances we should be factually correct. Analysis need not be given.

25 April 1994

"..... priority is the local media. This includes not only the Vernacular Press but all journalists present in the Valley. Whether we like it or not they are the superstars. My strategy is to cultivate them intellectually and behaviourally. They are more intimidated than subverted. .... lack journalistic ethics. Above all they are Kashmiris first. There is nothing wrong in being a Kashmiri. After all, they think what the people think .... think 'azadi'.

03 May 1994

A senior staff officer briefed the Jammu Press in Kupwara and mentioned about some "capability" of ours which is well known to Pak. Yes; he need not have mentioned it. Furore. There is a problem with openness. Subordinate officers at times do shoot-off their mouth, pass indiscreet remarks and exceed their brief. But higher commanders must bear with this and not over-react. I feel this is a small price for openness. In the long run it pays to have a few spokesmen who talk out of turn, than everyone clamming shut—hatch down.

Openness is good but media spokesmen must not show up the Civil Administration or any other organ of the Government in poor light. Bad taste.

15 May 1994

Without much ado, invited the entire local Press. Lunch followed by a litany of woes, grievances and even suggestions. The name of the game is contact.

I asked Commanding Officer (CO) 5 Garhwal Rifles (Srinagar Battalion) to be present to meet the journalists and understand our overall media thrust. I told him (in presence of all the scribes) that as a token of our trust in the local journalists, their houses should not be searched during 'crackdowns'. Moreover, journalists with accreditation or even press cards will have the liberty to move about freely during cordon and searches.

Following decisions arrived:

1. Setting up of an informal Core Group (CG) to include Salathia (PRO), senior journalists of the Urdu Press and DD/AIR.
2. 'CG' to recommend (a) working arrangements between Army and the media; (b) frequency of future contacts and (c) how best the Army will share information with them.

15 May 1994

Information handling in LIC is not an easy task. The problem gets exacerbated because Army Headquarters and Command Headquarters operate from peace stations; field formations are in a war zone. Perspectives clash. One has also got to have a lot of patience and the cool to put up with back-seat driving.

18 June 1994

Yesterday there was a rape near Mirgund (near Pattan). Today we put out a press release to say that the Army had taken a serious view of the incident and had ordered a Summary General Court Martial. Such openness and promptness takes out the sting from militant propaganda.[21]

26 June 1994

Media men are good sounding boards. They mirror the sentiments of the people - what is Delhi thinking, what is Srinagar saying? Informal interaction pays.

Media is an institution of the country - the Fourth Estate, and therefore has a vital role in nation building. Often they are laid-back because sensationalism gets the better of professionalism .... Good news is bad news. Roles for media in LIC:

1. Building and moulding popular opinion by debating issues.
2. Keeping the public informed of the ground situation.
3. Acting as a watch-dog over everyone involved — Government, security forces and militants included.

30 June 1994

'Information-crisis'and top-down pressure places a lot of strain on subordinate Headquarters, often leading to misunderstanding, suspicion and distrust ...... Some processing of information by intermediate Headquarters is essential since first reports are always exaggerated or vague. Staff in higher headquarters is the main culprit. They feel their competence is judged by how much and how fast they feed their commanders with information.

15 July 1994

There are three options to deal with the Vernacular Press:

1. Option 1 - Apply the laws of the land. What they publish is pure sedition. But the Judiciary in Kashmir lacks teeth. A legal battle will be a long drawn out slanging match and possibly inconclusive.
2. Option 2 - Apply the laws of natural justice. Ethically wrong. We shall lose the moral high ground, and in any case it does not solve the problem.
3. Option 3 - Befriend the local media. Confrontation and avoiding contact is not the answer. As long as the papers publish our version, the purpose is achieved. Befriending is not easy because some prominent local journalists told me that they would not like the militants or the Jammatis to see them in the company of the security forces.

The Tao of Conflict says that, a victory won by force leaves such deep scars of resentment that it is generally a pyrrhic victory. Better to wean away rather than win with a blow.

14 October 1994

Winning the Information War at every level - international, national and local, must consciously form a key element of our counter-militant strategy - a strategic imperative for any favourable political solution in Kashmir. The side that wins the information battle is the side that wields the power.

Right now we are going through rough weather. Information must be used in a wide sense. It includes:

PR.

Psychological Operations.

Openness in Media Management.

Reversing the Ill Effects of Pak Propaganda.

Greater Access to Civil Liberty Groups.

Sustaining the Commitment of the Nation.

Keeping the Public Informed of the Ground Situation.

Moderating the LM (local media).

08 November 1994

Third Wave media has already arrived. Media is a powerful tool of political influence. The same CNN that boosted George Bush in "Op Desert Storm", also brought the President down in his electoral fight against Clinton.

Third Wave media sets the political agenda; human rights, the electoral process, alienation, governance and Kashmir policy.

Third Wave media provides real-time face to face dialogue between all the principal actors - the government, the people and the institution of the state. The military has yet to grasp the potential of this three-way communication revolution.

Third Wave media is real-time - it decentralises the information war. In LIC, the military will need to loosen controls and get its 'party line' right even before the Government can. Subordinate commanders cannot be looking over their shoulders.

16 November 1994

Traditional thinking supports the view that war is two-dimensional - government vs government or army vs another army. Since wars were matters of the State, the people were generally excluded from participating except as victims of collateral damage. The 'body-count' game in LIC is a fallout of such thinking and reinforces this belief.

We need to understand that operations other than war are essentially information wars - all about people. At the core of the 'hearts and minds battle' lie the aspirations of the people. The mentality that wars are instruments of state policy only is outmoded. Modern war is 'Trinitarian' - people, army and government.

21 December 1994

We badly need PROs down to brigades. Not the typical PRO but good regimental officers with common sense and a flair for PR. The PRO is also the Community Officer.

At Corps level and below, all the constituents of 'information' must be under one General Staff Officer - human rights, media, psy operations and civic action. Leads to better focus and efficient coordination.

12 February 1995

The PRO or Media Officer cannot be any officer. Very few have the flair for PR, the quality of brain power, the deftness to brief media persons and handle awkward questions and the moral courage to accept responsibility. He must possess the following traits :

A deep background knowledge of militants and militancy.

Intelligent, articulate and a charmer who can intellectually win over his audience.

Have complete confidence of the Corps and Divisional commanders and be aware of official policy on each major issue, with the agility to improvise when clear cut answers are not at hand.

Be in complete picture of all tactical operations - past and present, instructions from higher Headquarters and views of the civil administration.

Have thorough and detailed knowledge of all issues connected with human rights, civic action and psy operations.

Where do you get an officer who fills this bill?

05 April 1995

No Army PRO in Srinagar. Several months have gone by. An Air Force Squadron Leader is officiating. So much for the DPR. The State Information Department too is moribund. No proper fax, STD facilities or satcom.

27 May 1995

BBC's "mother of all publications" image has been besmirched. Sheshan struck a blow today. He started his press conference at Raj Bhawan by ordering out the BBC's local representative - a stringer - Yusuf Jameel. Apart from the faux pas of showing Chechnya shots during Kashmir coverage, BBC has the typical British-style subtle slant in favour of underdogs - in this case the Kashmiris. Hiring a stringer known for his anti-India and pro-militant leanings, as well as underground contacts with militants, does not help BBC in establishing credibility. As the saying goes, a man is known by the company he keeps.

27 June 1995

The military mind does not seem to grasp the fact that media is consumeristic—consumeristic because it panders to the taste and hunger of the audience/ readership/viewership. Information is like any commodity - like toothpaste, like cars. Hence no sanctity is ascribed to a commodity. If we realise this we will stop over-reacting.

Consumerism, as an idea, is insensitive - insensitive to patriotism, to nationhood and even some of our cherished values in society. What matters is a good story; nothing else. For example, while reporting the plight of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, the media has at times been insensitive to their emotional scars.

Consumerism always seems to favour the underdog - the Muslim minority, the foreign mercenary and the seditious Vernacular Press. People want competition - amongst papers, with the Government and with other bits of information.

No point in belly-aching about media hype and media consumerism. How does Government challenge such consumerism? Not by withdrawing into a shell or nursing a deep sense of hurt. Government fights consumerism by facing the media challenge, by similar tactics - freely exchanging information (to the extent possible), by appearing to be transparent, by selling its viewpoint, by getting its bytes of information broadcast or published before the militants do.

03 July 1995

The new Corps Commander is on the ball. General JS Dhillon is a veteran in fighting insurgency - earned his spurs in Jaffna against the LTTE. Is not media shy and comes off candid and honest when dealing with the media. A first rate field commander.

The relationship between the military and the media has at times been adversarial and cantankerous. I believe the military ought to take the initiative to win the other's trust. The military's need of the media is more than the media's need of the military.

The schism between M and M boils down (when it occurs) to a clash of logic.

> The military's *right to deny information* which is sensitive and therefore may endanger the lives of the soldiers.
>
> vs
>
> The media's *right to know the truth* - right to know what the military is up to - policy, issues involved and progress of operations.

04 August 1995

Stringers are not professionals; their motive force is money. 'Stringer journalism' is a lucrative business in Kashmir. The principal stringer of one internationally reputed news house is earning upto Rs 1 lakh per month in hard currency.

Because of the 'stringer culture' (there are other reasons too) correspondents hurry down to Srinagar and file their reports on what is happening around in the countryside. Consequently, there are a lot of inconsistencies in their estimates. For want of any better word I call this 'Ahdoo Journalism' - Ahdoo is the popular hotel where all correspondents stay and where most meetings are held with 'sources'. This is reminiscent of Vietnam where journalists in droves used to hang out in the bars of Saigon. Srinagar is the solar plexus of the Valley but Srinagar is not a City-State like Cali, Kabul or Sarajevo.

10 September 1995

A reputed journalist mentioned yesterday that Gulam Nabi Khayal, a Stringer for VOA, managed to get a photograph of Otto, the Norwegian decapitated, by the Al Faran. He sold it to a Norwegian news agency for Rs. 60,000/-. What the Norwegian did not know was that 30 copies of the photo had already been circulated!

References

21. The accused were convicted and given 12 years rigorous imprisonment.

10

National Information and Media Policy

"Knowledge is Power"

Francis Bacon

Political power no longer comes out of the barrel of a gun. With the growing empowerment of the Indian citizen, what will ultimately matter is the power of the people. The use of people-power to determine the future of a section of society is all about knowledge and information. Consequently, conflict resolution has become more political and less military. The time has come for the Army to include information as a principle of war and conflict-resolution. Likewise, as the public's right to know grows, there is a requirement for the Government to have greater awareness of the information environment of the new age we are shifting gears into - the information age of the 21st century.

Like all developing countries, India is living in three ages at anyone time - agricultural, industrial and information. In the industrial age, enemy soldiers were destroyed by hard-kills - by firepower. In the information age, the weapon system aims at soft-kills: the weakening of the mind. The target mind is no longer the military mind only, but the nation as a whole - 940 million minds. In the information age, wars and political conflicts will be preceded by infoattacks - disinformation, psychological warfare and propaganda campaigns. Adversaries will attempt to win without firing bullets and rockets. This is not futurology; it has already happened - CNN won the war for the Multi-National Forces in Iraq well before the Iraqi Republican Guards were destroyed. The Patriot missiles were projected as having 100 per cent kill ratios - a myth that was exploded only after the war. But everyone including the Iraqis believed that the Patriot was super accurate.

Today, India possesses one of the most powerful soft-kill weapon systems any country can boast of. The everyday reach of the Indian print media in urban and rural areas is awesome. About 760,000,000 Indian adults are reading about 20,000 newspapers, journals and weeklies. In the Valley, apart from two English dailies, the increase in Urdu dailies and weeklies after 1989 has been phenomenal:

	Before 1989	*After 1989*	*Increase %*
Daily	17	19	111 %
Weekly	16	19	118 %
	33	38	115 %

The illiterates among the masses are being taken care of by the invasion from the sky - satellite TV. Pictures speak more powerfully than printed words.

Despite four decades of experience in fighting militancy and terrorism in the country, a national information or media policy has yet to see the light of day. This partly explains why the Government and the security forces are either reactive or at times at cross purposes with each other in disseminating information at the local level. To make matters worse, there are no efficient infrastructures at national or state level for laying down and monitoring policy, defining the ground rules and coordinating information activities of various media agencies. On the military front, some guidelines do exist but one would like to see greater openness and delegation.

Governments and the military the world over have been slow to grasp the full potential of Fourth Generation Warfare - of the present and tomorrow's information environment. We are no exceptions. Media chariness and reluctance to be open with information are traits common to civil servants and military men. Both are shareholders in India's bureaucratic system.

Unlike as in the United States where the media is not the "darling of the masses", the Press in this country has the full support of the people. Recount the public's protest and outrage against measures to curb the press by way of the Central Bill, the Bihar Press Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Bill. All government attempts in this direction failed because of stiff opposition from the people. Peoples' support for the Indian Press is primarily on two accounts: the lack of credibility of

Government owned Doordarshan and All India Radio and the people's attachment to their Fundamental Right of Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19) enshrined in the Constitution. The credibility in the Government's electronic media has been further eroded by unrestricted reception of satellite TV channels. Worse still, the power of the TV is also being 'misemployed' by free-market economies of the West to pursue their economic and political interests; India be damned! What ultimately matters to them is what India's growing 300 million middle class buys. Their TV stations are also systematically attacking the antiquated Official Secrets Act of 1923 - they are telling the people what information the Government has been hiding from them.

Such being the power of the media, the need of the hour is not to lament or castigate the Government, but to create an awareness for inevitability for Government to change.

The first and most important issue policy makers need to address is the freedom of information - the right of the citizen to know and the obligation of the Government to inform the people. Unless and until such a 'two-way street' approach is adopted, there can never be openness. Concealing information is as culpable as restricting information. The single obstacle in the path towards this glasnost is the outdated, 'catch-all' Official Secrets Act of 1923. Enacted over seven decades ago, (and amended in 1967) the provisions were well suited for British Raj. The colonists departed our shores nearly 50 years back, but they left their rear guards too - bureaucrats in safaris and bureaucrats in uniform. Security is still being treated as a holy cow and a cover-up for bunglings and weaknesses in policy as well as expenditure. Section 5 of the Act in particular is draconian as it enables the Government to clamp down on the media for frivolous reasons. The other serious flaw is the absence of any defence on the grounds of public interest. And believe me, there has been enough to hide in the five decades of Independence by both the politicians and the bureaucrats.

The Janata Government (1977-79) set up a working group of Secretaries to the Government to review the Act, with the intent of relaxing the tight controls over use of information. After five months of deliberations, the working group opined that there was nothing harsh in the Act; neither was it an obstacle in the free flow of information. Another futile attempt at tinkering was made by the National Front Government in 1989. Three years later, on 3 December, 1992, the Government informed the Parliament:

> "Government has been considering appropriate steps towards openness and transparency in the functioning of Government. In view, however, of the importance and complexity of issues involved, formulation of definite views and proposals would necessarily take time".

Politicians of all hues want greater transparency but are hamstrung because of adamant bureaucrats who are afraid to offer satisfactory answers from a demanding public. Any change in the Official Secrets Act of 1923 will tantamount to loss of the bureaucrats' power of influence. In his microscopic view, openness will lead to dissent. This is where the debate stops. In practical terms, the debate can be re-opened provided Parliament considers granting freedom of information a statutory if not a constitutional status. Tinkering with a piece of outmoded legislation is certainly not the answer.

There is a lot of confused thinking in differentiating between an information policy and a media policy. Both are interlinked. Information policy concerns the right of a citizen to information within and without government, and the enactment of laws to facilitate such a flow. Information policy would also encompass:

- The need for Government to keep Parliament and the public fully informed.
- Strategic and operational focus on political and tactical objectives.

Media policy on the other hand includes all elements relating to information and communications, and is used to define:

- Government's relationship with the media.
- Role of the media with regard to the socio-political and economic development of India and national security.
- Management and coordination of information.

Information policy is an instrument for achieving political aims and objectives of the state. Without an information policy there can be no media policy. And in the absence of any consistent or clear cut political direction on affairs of national security, particularly in regards to fighting terrorism and militancy, there can be no information policy.

The principle threat to India's security is from within. Militancy and terrorism pose serious threats to democratic institutions, economic development and governability of the state. A clear cut information policy borne out of equally clear political objectives, will enable the Government and the security forces to use media as a force multiplier in its fight against militancy and terrorism. Consequently, the political content of the information policy will need to include the following guidelines or themes for media as well as all government agencies:

- There will be no compromise on the sovereignty of India, and all political settlements will be within the constitutional framework of the Union and through democratic process.
- Winning the hearts and minds of the people and isolating the terrorist ought to be objective number one.
- Narrowing the credibility gap between the official position and the media's stand, especially by way of promptness in releasing information. Credibility invariably goes to the side that gets in first with a factually valid story - the Government and security force's response is always slow and often with a doctored version of events.
- Neutralisation of Pakistan's active moral, material and training support for terrorists and militants. Neutralisation must aim at exposing Pakistan's proxy war tactics to the world media. Proof and not mere propaganda would make India's case credible.
- Counteracting hostile propaganda at home and

abroad. So far, little has been done to counter disinformation except asking Indian missions abroad to educate international opinion. Doordarshan lacks the ability to go beyond our geographical borders and AIR's external services have a very limited audience. On the other hand, Pakistan conducts its external services through Pakistan Television 2 (PTV-2) by hiring transponder facilities on ASIASAT, a consortium of three companies based in Hong Kong.

For the past decade the progress in evolving a national media policy has been painfully slow. The underlying reason for this stalemate, surprisingly, appears to be the media's suspicion of greater Government control and encroachment on the freedom of the Press. The word 'policy' acquires great sensitivity since it seems to convey strong undertones of 'control and regulation'. Moreover, the myriad and composite character and ownership of the media makes consensus difficult. Radio and Television are state owned whereas the print media is to a large extent privately owned. Although Centre and State ownership is restricted to about 2.3 per cent only, this composite equation in holdings generates a feeling of State encroachment on the freedom of the Press, and further complicates the interplay of relationships between private and government media.

Greater dialogue between government and media is overdue in order to arrive at broad agreement on major issues affecting media. As a starter, media policy should address itself to functional issues which are easily definable and non-controversial, e.g. training of journalists by the Press Council, normalising exercise of executive controls on newsprint, advertising and enhancing credibility of Doordarshan and AIR. These confidence building measures will allay the fears of the press and prepare the way for inclusion of more seminal issues.

There are more people who listen to AIR and watch Doordarshan than those who read newspaper editorials. AIR coverage of the country is nearly 95 per cent; yet the audio and visual impact of the Government's electronic media at ground level has been negligible. Despite the fact that Doordarshan has lately perked up, it will take a long time for the credibility gap to be bridged. In times of a major crisis within the Valley, people still turn to BBC to obtain (what they perceive to be) the factual position. Doordarshan Srinagar functions under a siege mentality, under-staffed, professionally poor and never on time. Field reporting is not only late, it is amateurish and blatantly pro-Government. These are not insurmountable problems and if looked into honestly, will help Doordarshan present a better image in the Valley.

Media policy ought to discuss in detail the subject of freedom and independence of the press. Freedom is guaranteed by Article 19 (1) of the Constitution subject to restrictions in Article 19 (2).[22] Apart from the Constitution, there are several statutory curbs on the freedom of the Press. Although some of these laws are intimidating, in practice they have not (except during the Emergency) affected the freedom of the Press. It is the executive controls exercised by the Government that makes the Press suspicious.[23] There has been some loosening of Government grip on this account, but greater non-discriminatory measures are still required and could form part of the media policy. There is also a need for enactment of laws for Right to Information. It is unfortunate that several reports and documents which are over 40 years old have still not been made available for public examination. The Henderson Brooks Report on the 1962 debacle and the Official History of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War are cases in point. Unless greater openness is practised, the formulation of a media policy is unlikely.

Finally, on the subject of press freedom, media policy must also examine the need for de-linking the Press from business houses for diffusion of control of its ownership. Some 42.3 per cent of all papers are privately owned, but quite a few owners are blameworthy for biased reporting. De-linking of ownership is also a subject for in-depth examination and review by a Press Commission.

The next sensitive issue concerns journalistic ethics which has attracted considerable media outcry. The media views a code of ethics as infringement of its freedom and independence, and an affront to its reputation as the Fourth Estate (and quite rightly so). Government should detach itself from this debate and allow the media to evolve its own ethical code. Whether the Press Council or Ombudsmen watch over the ethical conduct of journalists, it is a matter for the media to resolve through self-regulation and internal discipline.

Next on the agenda should be the role of the media, specifically in promoting and strengthening internal stability as an important safeguard for national security. The Press has two functions in this regard. First, to strongly and unequivocally condemn secession and terrorism and support democratic processes to solve problems. Secondly, to publish the legitimate grievances of regions on account of economic neglect, exploitation or apprehension of loss of cultural identity. In this manner, the Press focuses public attention on these issues, thus building up pressure upon the Government to institute political and economic measures to alleviate them. In this field, the national media has made positive contributions, but the same cannot be said of the vernacular Press. Excepting for a few papers (like those of the *Hind Samachar* Group, *Tribune* and *Kashmir Times*), the performance of the Kashmiri Urdu Press has been poor. Urdu papers in the Valley have concentrated on anti-India attacks and pro-militant news.

In low intensity operations the vernacular Press has a greater influencing role on people in rural and even urban areas than any other form of media. It is the vernacular Press that continues to be intimidated by militants, and in some cases like the *Aftab* and *Al-Safa*, they have become the terrorists' mouthpiece. However, there are also examples from Punjab where papers like the *Tribune* and Jallandar based *Hind Samachar* Group bravely stood their ground against murderous attacks on journalists and hawkers. Media policy must therefore consider all possible ways in which to promote the growth, circulation and quality of the vernacular Press (without strings attached), and serve an important function of "reinforcing literacy". Towards this end, it is worthwhile providing (through an effective Press Council) newsprint at cheaper rates, adequate advertisements and technical assistance on a non-discriminatory basis. Another key area where the Government can help is in providing news service facilities in regional languages and cheap distribution networks at subsidised rates. There are nearly 400 language dailies who cannot afford PTI and UNI services, and are therefore dependent upon AIR's slow speed news bulletins. Excepting UNI which provides Urdu services, both agencies transmit in Hindi only. Providing multilingual facilities will overcome to a fair extent another problem of the language press - the problem of filling space. In the absence of news, papers are wont to publish non-serious and sensational news items which in LIC situations willy nilly favour the militant.

There is considerable scope for improving the reach and quality of services of news agencies. Although substantially funded by Government, news agencies need to be autonomous functionally and financially. Presently, there is no foreign coverage by Press Trust of India (PTI) and United News of India (UNI). Indian news service should cover Asia, the Middle East and other areas vital to our national interest. Foreign news agencies continue to dominate international news sections in leading newspapers, whereas Indian news agencies are ineffective in dissemination of national news abroad. With the communications revolution, it should not be difficult to modernise and reorganise the news agencies.

Media policy must also address the relative imbalance in treatment of issues between urban and rural areas. The electronic media and the vernacular Press can be effectively employed to correct the imbalance.

And lastly, professional and broad based training of journalists merits immediate attention. With some exceptions, journalism has become specialised and it is essential to organise subject-specific journalism training through the revamped Press Council. Niche-journalism is the order of the day.

While an information policy is still a distant realisation, coordination of information by various official agencies is imperative. The political and operational objectives of the national strategy for fighting militancy and terrorism have to be disseminated to target audiences, coordinated at all levels and monitored continuously. At present, all agencies are working in water-tight compartments and often at cross purposes. Doordarshan and AIR have several priorities, militancy is just one. Even guidelines regarding treatment of militancy related news are ambivalent. Instead, the gravest threat to the country's integrity is being met by unstructured meetings held at the official levels. Very little planning, continuity and monitoring goes into these meetings. There is therefore an emergent need for a Strategic Core Group under the Cabinet Secretary or the Minister from the Prime Minister's Office to plan, implement, coordinate and monitor the information war (including media strategy) and conduct psychological operations externally and internally. The Strategic Core Group could subsequently form part of the National Security Council as and when it is instituted. There is no military solution for militancy and terrorism, because the issues at stake are non-military. Political, diplomatic and economic interests are all involved, and all are affected by the flow of information. Accordingly, the Strategic Core Group could comprise members from key ministries (Home, External Affairs, Economic Affairs, Information and

Broadcasting and Defence), the Armed Forces, Central Police Forces and intelligence organisations like the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing.

A similar committee at state level under the Adviser to the Governor, the Chief Secretary or Chief Minister should be instituted to replace the ad-hocism that currently exists. Simultaneously, Government should take the initiative to review and revitalise the defunct Media Relations Committee and the Inter Media Publicity Coordination Committee. Both these committees could be combined into one with adequate representation from the vernacular Press.

Media policy must take into account guidelines on accreditation as a means of controlling the first problem in any security operation - access. This helps in restricting numbers and achieving quality reporting. Access is not mere physical presence in the combat zone, but also covers briefings and provision of material, transport and communications. These facilities are denied to non-accredited correspondents. Accreditation is also the basis of bargain with correspondents in the field and exercising loose and non-formal control over information.

There is one problem of accreditation in a counter-insurgency environment. Correspondents, particularly those belonging to the vernacular Press, have free access. As stated above, access has more connotations than mere physical presence. It is the aspect of information bargain which matters even more. This basic contractual feature of accreditation has seldom been followed in any major security operation. How many will be accredited? Will their material be pooled? Has pooling been considered to control numbers and the disruptive and often unethical competition within media? Should media select journalists? Have accreditation lists been made out for the vernacular Press? Despite several media lessons from various campaigns, the Director Public Relations (DPR) has yet to address these issues concerning the accreditation process. Even the State Administration in J and K has been tardy on this account.

As the numbers of journalists involved is large, pooling is the only means of furnishing the media with reliable and full coverage. DPR must make pooling an attractive proposition for journalists who want to roam about freely. In such circumstances, planning should cater for the largest pool possible. Another connected issue is the selection of the pool. DPR should choose the agencies and the agencies in turn should have the right to select their journalists. However, to prevent entry of individuals who in the past have not stuck to journalistic norms, DPR ought to be given the right to veto individuals.

In the past, the accreditation of foreign media has not featured in DPR's scheme of things. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) must get rid of this paranoia. The absence of foreign reporters will damage India's credibility in the international propaganda war. Their inclusion in the pool is a must.

It is also for consideration by DPR that, the concept of accreditation should encompass attaching correspondents to field formations in the Valley. These correspondents will be expected to accompany security forces on various operations and report accurately upon ground conditions.

Not only will this scheme be a check on errant behaviour by soldiers, it will encourage openness and effectively counter propaganda by Pakistan and the vernacular Press. Moreover, the familiar presence of correspondents amongst troops will go a long way in ridding security forces of media-shyness.

Official ideas about pre-censorship are quite outmoded and in militancy situations these can be damaging. While censorship can be effective in a war situation because the access of correspondents can be strictly controlled, in a militancy environment it can be counter-productive because of the ease with which correspondents are free to move about. At a conceptual plane, censorship will destroy the freedom of the Press.

We should learn from BLUE STAR and Tsrar-e-Sharif and never ever forget the price the country paid for blanking out information. In sharp contrast, the second Golden Temple operation - BLACK THUNDER, was carried out under the full glare of the media and extensive coverage was encouraged. Even the Hazratbal crises in October-November 1993 was extremely well handled by urging media involvement and keeping journalists in complete picture. Moreover, the greater openness that already exists in the Indian society would militate against censorship. Any attempt at imposition of the same would provide propaganda material to Pakistan and Human Rights activists. The emerging communications technology now enables the media to bypass military and official channels or attempts at censorship. Citizens of the region affected by militancy, having found the Government's coverage less than accurate, will willingly fall prey to the misinformation and propaganda carried out by PTV and Radio.

The second form of controlling information is vetting, a euphemism for censorship. In theory, vetting implies that before a despatch is cleared for publication, the following are checked out: inaccuracies to be corrected; the facts and tone of the report; and holding back information which may jeopardise future operations and lives of the security forces. While in a war situation vetting may be effective to some degree, in its operative form in India it is no different to censorship. In the long run, it erodes the trust that must exist between media, military and the Government. Vetting must therefore stop.

The third form of censorship is "self-censoring." It was tried out successfully in Israel and to a large extent in Vietnam. Ground rules in Vietnam were violated nine times only in matters concerning operational security. And wherever security was endangered, it was mainly because of infiltration by the Viet Cong into higher echelons of media and government. A situation like this is unlikely to obtain in the Indian context. In Vietnam, it was the visual impact which was disturbing.

Self-censorship works on an honour system, a trust, an agreement between the security forces and the editors. It sends out a strong signal of openness to the people and the media. It tells the media that there is nothing to hide, and shortcomings as and when they occur will be looked into and set right. Self-censorship in fact improves the image of the

Government and the security forces. It is the middle ground between absolute freedom and absolute control.

Self-censorship can function effectively provided the media knows what subjects are restricted and will therefore need official clearance before publication. These are called stop lists and should include the following:

Composition and location of units.

Details of military movement.

Operational plans and intentions.

Operational orders.

Casualties.

Organizations.

Tactical details of defensive positions.

Names of individual servicemen.

Undoubtedly there will be strong arguments against self-censorship. The pressures of competition, the loss of independence and the feeling in some media quarters that, the role of media is to disclose, are some of the more common ones. These arguments are untenable for the simple reason that, those who violate the "voluntary agreement " can be de-accredited, and if need arises prosecuted in court. The existing laws may not be preventive, but being punitive they are a strong deterrent against those who infringe the ground rules.

References

22. Clause 2 imposes restrictions "... in the interests of

sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relations to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence".

23. Controls are in the nature of the Government's policy on advertising and release of newsprint on subsidised rates, and extra-legal action. However, in the context of the current economic liberalization, the Government has decontrolled the import of newsprint.

11

Religion and Political Violence

Religious fundamentalism and political violence have a strong nexus. No other belief or idea attacks the mind more decisively and irrationally. It spares no room for moderation, for logic, for sanity. In the history of mankind more people have died in the name of religion than for any other single cause. Consequently, those responsible for managing political violence - politicians, civil servants and military men, must have thorough understanding of how history and culture have been (and are being) deliberately distorted in the name of religion, to arouse the passions of the populace. Even those who are being exploited in the name of some God, also need to be educated in sanity, individualism, secular ideals and liberal values.

Let us take a break from Islam, the whipping boy of today's religious fundamentalism. The perceived threat of Islamic fundamentalism is of recent origin and therefore it sticks more firmly in the minds of today's generation. The other two great religions, Christianity and Hinduism, also contain aggressive concepts in thought as well as deed. Those who level criticism at Islamic fundamentalism need to look into their own religions too. History records that revivalism and aggression have been the bane of all religions. In the 11th and 12th Centuries, Europe witnessed a revival of Christianity culminating into the well known Holy Crusades against the Muslims. The Muslim threat was live and palpable in the heartland of Europe - Spain. 'Reconquista' was the Christian cry, a movement to reconquer Spain from the Muslims and the impetus for the Spanish Inquisition - the suppression of Heresy. Pope Urban II - 1095, also considered military assistance to the Byzantines as a means of forging ecclesiastical unity between the Western and Eastern Churches. During the Council of Government on 18 November 1095, Pope Urban II set out the Christian agenda. He declared that those who were not Christians were infidels and war against them was justified; in fact it was pleasing to God. The Pope expressed his unhappiness at the molestation of Christian pilgrims in the Holy City of Jerusalem and the desecration of Christian shrines. The Pope's declaration was the clarion call for the Crusades. Even before the main Christian juggernaut could roll eastwards, small bands of religious fanatics the like of Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless, set out towards Jerusalem on their own.

The Holy Crusades were holy wars as a reaction to threat of Islam. Their intent was transparently clear - the expansion of and influence of Christianity - a missionary enterprise for winning souls for God. Adventurous and bold, the Crusaders went a long way in setting up Christian missions belonging to Dominican and Franciscan friars right up to Iran and China. Clinically, at least in concept, there is only a subtle difference in Christian and Islamic concepts of 'holy war'. Christians believed that the use of force for conversion was morally wrong; but force could create the right environment for preaching and spread of Christianity.

Medieval Christianity was associated with a system of strong religious controls bordering on fanaticism. Abandonment of Christianity after having been baptised was Apostasy - a sin, as serious as adultery or murder. In its modern 20th Century form, the spirit of Apostasy is still found in the Roman Catholic code of Ex-communication, especially those who choose to leave the monastic order without permission of the Church.

In Christian faith, Blasphemy is still regarded with concern. Irreverance to the Christian God was regarded by theologians and saints like St Thomas Aquinas as sin against the Faith. Under the Mosaic Laws of 6th Century Europe, a citizen accused of blasphemy was to be stoned to death. The harsh response to blasphemy stemmed from the belief that an attack on religion constituted an attack on the state. As recent as the 18th Century, blasphemy in Scotland was punishable with death. Even today, blasphemy is a statutory and a common law offence in the United Kingdom and several states of the USA.

The words 'Schism' and 'Heresy' are derived from orthodox Christian dogma. In early Christianity, 'Schism' was used to describe groups that broke away from the Church and set up rival

Churches. These break-away groups remained within the Christian-fold but disagreed over certain issues. The division of the Church into the Western Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches is one example.

In the 12th and 13th Centuries, the Church set up the 'Inquisition'[24] (judicial review) to fight Heresy. Derived from the Greek word 'haircsis' or 'art of choosing', Heresy is a theological doctrine that is rejected by the Christian Church. Anti-Church interpretations were considered sinful and punishments could be brutal like burning at the stake (Joan of Arc). This stemmed from the theo-philosophical explanation that only the Church was the repository and interpreter of divine revelations. In its anxiety to keep religious doctrines 'pure', the Church created a monitoring mechanism by way of the Ecclesiastical Councils ratified by the Pope. However, after the Reformation in the 16th Century, the Church has shown great tolerance in its ecumenical movement.

In the second half of Twentieth Century, the Church was actively involved in supporting insurrection in Latin America (Peru's Shining Path and the Tupamaros), Sandanistas in Nicaragua, El Salvador, LTTE in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland. In Argentina, the Church even supported state-sponsored violence. The role of the "bishops" in Argentina's dirty war is well known. Of late, the Argentinan Church has begged forgiveness for the support they provided to the military as well as the guerrillas. The 1968 Colombian meet of bishops in Latin America declared that, the Church must commit itself in making the poor masses aware of their rights in order to bring about just and moral societies. The basis of this Liberation Theology is the Christian doctrine of Man, which in turn flows out from the concept of atonement and eternal life. Man is considered to live in sin until redeemed by the Faith. In the process, the Church is expected to play a pro-active role in its fight against market forces attempting to dehumanise society, and impediments that prevent man from living in accordance with the Bible. We see here a fusion of Marxism and Christianity.

Liberation Theology is rooted in the belief that God's power manifests itself in love, and therefore no authoritarian ruler can take away a person's rights or freedom. The theory also believes that all men are born equal and Christian doctrine only tries to elevate his position - higher status - "world reforming" and "world transforming". Baptism and Evangelist "born again concept" is a direct fallout of such thinking. The least that the Church can do is to restore the status quo.

The Revolutionary Vanguard in Peru (later merged into the Shining Path) was founded by a priest Julio Ceasar Mezzich. A large number of priests in Peru looked upon social injustice, exploitation and human persecution as anti-Christ and against the Brotherhood of Man. Consequently, they exhorted the peasants to rise and fight for their fundamental rights.

> "Come now, ye rich; weep and lament over the woes which are coming upon you. Your health has wasted away and your garments are become moth eaten, your gold and silver are rusted, and the rust thereof shall be in witness against you, and it shall feed upon your flesh like as fire. Ye have laid up treasure against the last days.

> Behold the wage of labourers who reaped your fields crieth out, being withholden by you, and the cries of the harvesters have come 'unto the ears of the Lord of Hosts'. Ye have abandoned yourselves on earth to luxury and pleasure, ye have fattened your hearts 'for the day of the slaughter."[25]

The judgement on Christianity is that while it has not preached violence, it has displayed intolerance towards other religions and has been a catalyst for socio-politico change, at times violent, especially in this century.

Hindu Rashtra (nation) is a way of life, not a theological state. The Constitution of India defines Hindus as a community which includes Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains. The Hindu Code Bill's provisions apply equally to all these three religions. Unlike the revealed religions, Hinduism has no dogma. The multiplicity of interpretations lie in the words of a series of sages - there is no The Book.

The myth of the Aryan Race has done untold damage to Indian society of the past and the Jews in living memory. Even the belief regarding Aryanisation of non-Aryans in India has no historical basis. The Aryans were genetically no different, they only spoke another language. The illusion regarding the superiority of the Aryan Race was directly responsible for rise of Brahamanism, which in turn became a synonym for Hinduism. The myth was perpetuated by several Indian and Western scholars who surveyed Indian history through Brahmanical texts. They also glossed over another fact - the absence of a single religious order in Hinduism. The Dharamashastras make no mention of Hindu Dharma but they do talk about Gramadharma, Shrenidharma and Jatidharma.

After nearly 5000 years of stratified equations, Indian society, under the powerful drive of Mandalisation (a socio-economic policy for greater job reservations for the 'lower castes') has set in motion a silent social revolution (at times violent) to change the status quo. Ancient and medieval society maintained its balance by dividing society into high and low castes, each being assigned a specific role (Varna Dharma). Although rigid, it was flexible enough to throw up a Valmiki or a Kabir or a Raidas. But overall, the effect was debilitating; a society drawn up along caste lines produced an ideology which was anti-liberalism, anti-humanism and anti-secularism. It perpetuated the superiority of the upper caste.

Unfortunately, Indian history has been interpreted along caste and community lines with religion as the basis of Indian society. Periodisation of history into Hindu, Muslim and British periods is again indicative of this religious bias. The last trauma was Partition, the culmination of the 'Two-Nation Theory'. While this gave an opening to India becoming a nation state, it also spawned the rise of political and religious parties like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh (in its earlier incarnation as the forerunner of the BJP), the Shiv Sena, the Vishva Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal. With the Congress-I and Leftists also wooing the voter along caste and religious lines, Hindu right-wing parties dug in their heels - in their perception, secularism had become impracticable.

Hinduism has survived despite rule by the Muslims and the British, primarily because it is not a religion but a way of life which has tremendous flexibility - flexibility to select any path leading to Him. A millennium back, Shankaracharya redefined the Vedanta which gave Hinduism the resilience to survive the Muslim era. Much later though, British liberation enabled social reformist movements (Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj) led by sages like Raja Rammohan, Dayanand, Vivekanand and later Mahatma Gandhi to bring about Hindu revival. Recent Hindu revivalism is therefore a modern phenomenon - about 200 years old.

In the absence of political cohesion, Indian unity was achieved by Hindu cultural survival which willy nilly identified itself with the ideology of nationalism. Beginning in the 10th Century, the spiritual heritage contained in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* (religious scriptures) provided the cornerstone of India's emerging national identity.

During the first half of the 20th Century, Hindu revivalism moved a step forward towards ideas of Western liberalism, democracy and socialism. Indian nationalism drew heavily on European models, particularly the British because of a long spell of colonial rule. Indian nationalism came to be regarded as *Nehruvian* nationalism (based on Nehru's doctrines) in the post-Independence era, an adaptation of Fabian Socialism of the British Liberals.

After Nehru's death, Indian politics lost its moral highground. Till today, the downslide has not been checked. Most party leaders have been creating vote banks by pandering to caste and religious factors.

Hindu right wingers viewed this race for power by the Congress, the Left and pro-low caste parties as a sell out on nationalism. The erosion of secularism, the inconsistency and 'farce' of a secular state, and support to Muslim Personal Law (despite the Supreme Court's appeal for a common civil code) were the last straws.

Hindu Rashtra is therefore the objective of Hindu fundamentalists, and in theory at least, they argue that they are taking a civilizational rather than religious view - civilization as the heart and soul of Hindu nationalism or Hindustan. Hindutva nationalists contend that Hindu culture and civilization ought to be the soul of Hindutva. They acknowledge the contributions made by Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity and Islam but argue that the quintessence of Indian civilization has been Hinduism.

Re-assertion of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s occured due to many reasons - the failure of the Nehruvian secular model, the orthodox and uncompromising Islamic concept of 'ummah', the rise of Sikh religious militancy, assertion of Islamic fundamentalism within and in India's neighbourhood, and most important of all, the misuse of religion and caste by all political parties.

The concept of Hindu Rashtra advocates a single and homogeneous national identity for the entire country, rejecting the idea that India is a multi-nation state. Hindutva or Indianness is the sum total of ever-evolving qualities and attributes, moral and ethical values, and the attitude of mind which give to the inhabitants of this country a distinctive identity. In theory, the term Hindutva may not identify itself with the values of the followers of a particular religion. In practice, however, dominant attributes of Hindutva are synonymous with the Hindu population.

In the militant Hindu version of nationalism, all religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originating in India are considered part of Hindu cultural traditions. All these religions share the concept of reincarnation, 'Karma' (deeds) and obligations based on 'Dharma' (religion). On the other hand, Indian nationalism, as represented by the more moderate Hindus, holds that Hinduism is part of Indian civilization and all other religions in India, including Islam and Christianity, have been deeply influenced by Hinduism.

Refuting the charge of religious revivalism, Hindu nationalists remind their critics of Deendayal Upadhyaya's concept of Integral Humanism - a reconciliation of Western and Bharatiya thinking and an equilibrium between spiritual India and its material practices. Apart from acting as a catalyst for cultural renaissance, Humanism also meets the peoples' urge for political and economic emancipation. This logic forms an alternative to Nehruvian socialism and the capstone of Bharatiya Janata Party's 'Swadeshi' economic model - economics to be guided more by India's cultural ethos rather than free market forces (in theory at least). Of late, the economic nonsense of such a theory is dawning upon them and Hindu fundamentalists have started to become aware of the inter-connectivity of the world market.

Hindu fundamentalists have come under severe criticism for espousing the spread of Hindu 'dharma'. But they defend it on grounds of Integral Humanism. To an individual, 'dharma' does not mean religion, but "eternal principles" that sustain him in society. In the context of society, 'dharma' is defined as "the enunciation of duties and obligations towards society, at different stages in life and different roles for the purpose of human existence". In the field of politics, 'dharma' accepts religious diversity and respect for all religions.

In the world of reality (and perception), India's teeming under-privileged masses dismiss this as insincere rhetoric, and consider Hindutva as a sophisticated method of continuing to keep society divided along caste lines. The demolition of the Babri Masjid, the BJP's ultra rightist fringe - the *'sadhus'* (holy man) and *'sadhvis'* (holy woman), the Bajrang Dal and the Shiv Sena, do not allay the people's suspicion. What is feared is the establishment of a theological government run on fascist and upper-caste lines. This is what lies at the bottom of political violence in the country today - communalism and polarisation of Indian society along religious and caste basis. This is also what is affecting the arithmetic of Indian Parliament.

Add a few drops of Hindutva to Islam and one has uncontrolled violence. Fortunately, Indian Muslims have not been affected by the concept of 'ummah' in the manner it has influenced other Islamic societies. Sufism and the hidden hand of caste (peculiar to the Indian sub-continent) have a lot to do in taming the rise of Muslim fundamentalism outside Kashmir. Ever since the departure of the Mughals, Indian Muslims have attempted no revivalism. Self-advancement characterises the Indian Islamic Movement. For Indian Muslims, Islam is really a religion, not a political ideology or entity. Participation in politics violates the basic tenets of the 'ummah', which is traditionally opposed to ideals of secularism, democracy and individualism.

This is India's saving grace, this is why we shall always be two screws away from a Communal Bomb.

There is also a message for Kashmir. The antidote for Islamic fundamentalism is secularism not Hindu fundamentalism. If unchecked, Hindutva may trigger off the Communal Bomb and polarise Indian society along religious lines. Hopefully, sanity will prevail, but the threat is very much there.

References

24. Inquisition was a judicial institution belonging to the Church to effectively deal with heresy, witchcraft and sorcery. Punishments could range from imprisonment, confiscation of property, denial of citizen rights, excommunication and death. There were two well known judicial institutions: the Roman Inquisition in 1542 AD to fight Protestantism, and the Spanish Inquisition during the 15th Century to deal with the threat posed by former Jews and Muslims.
25. Chapter 5, Epistle of St James.

Part Three

SOLDIER

12

The Outline of Kashmiri Psyche

Indian perceptions about a Kashmiri Muslim underscores the outcome of the Government's hearts and minds battle. It is the most serious mental challenge security forces face in the Valley today. Negative perceptions are immediately translated into body language as well as behaviour towards the people. The negative stimuli that is generated lies at the root of brutalising the soldier and alleged violation of human and citizen rights. Such perceptions also affect how the nation looks at the political conundrum - at the political impasse in Kashmir.

The popular Kashmiri portrait is a psychological baggage of what the British left behind - a caricature perceived by many to be true. The Kashmiri is ethnically different - different in many respects from the mainstream typical "me" or "one of us". Walter R Lawrence's *The Valley of Kashmir* is reputed to be one of the few definitive books on Kashmir. Lawrence was an Indian Civil Services

(ICS) officer who served as the Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir during the last decade of the 19th Century. Written in 1904, the book describes the Kashmiri as:

1. Emotional and indolent, but cunning and dishonest as a result of oppression over the centuries. (This has engendered the survival instinct).
2. Superior intellect but conceited; degraded yet intellectual.
3. Imbibed with a great historical sense; articulate and given to exaggeration.
4. Accustomed to strong central authority but likes to be left alone. A Kashmiri always overstates his case (This trait is born out of the experience of finding difficulty in seeking redress from officials).
5. Kashmiris are opposed to change even when it is for their good. They are conservative, frozen in time and this explains why Mughal, Pathan, Sikh and Dogra rules have left no impact. (There is therefore a need for political patience and not to expect the population to be de-alienated just because a popular government is sworn in. Kashmiris have, as revealed in history, become sceptics and we must acknowledge this reality in political dialogue and negotiations).
6. The urban Kashmiri is lazy; he feels it is the duty of the state to look after him.

Every civilization, every nation, every society has a collective psyche distinct from others - a psyche which is the product of his civilization. A Chinese therefore does not think like an American or an Indian. Likewise, good Pakistani logic may be lousy logic for an Indian and vice versa. In the game for winning over estranged people, what matters is how delicately the subjects' psyche is handled. We have yet to define the Kashmiri mind. We have even failed to analyse Kashmiri psyche under the Dogras and then later "self-rule" within Indian democratic traditions. In Kashmir, we have either been projecting the "Indian" image or reinforcing by our denials the "Pakistani" image. At no stage has there been an attempt to bring up an image that is acceptable to this sub-national segment of our population - the folly of defining what is not rather than what is.

Mental conditioning of a soldier is the biggest challenge all field commanders face today. The task is uphill because it first involves cleansing the soldier of his faulty perceptions about Kashmiris, and thereafter implanting fresh ideas. A soldier is conservative by nature and by training and this makes the going tough.

> "The soldier is the most conservative creature on earth. It is really dangerous to give him an idea because he will not adopt it until it is obsolete, and then will not abandon it until it has nearly destroyed him."
>
> JFC Fuller in his Memoirs

Conservatism is not the only difficulty. Soldiers think like ecclesiasts, they think in extremes - black or white, love or hate, hell or heaven, friend or foe. A soldier's simple logic seldom operates in the grey zone. The soldier's psycho-logic in Kashmir is also affected by a variety of environmental factors - the militant's gun, hostile propaganda by Pakistan, anti-India and anti-security forces tirades in the vernacular Press and false allegations of Human Rights violations. Casualties to comrades only harden his logic and agitate his mind. The equally simple Kashmiri then becomes suspect in his eyes - a "collaborator", a "pro-Pak" an "anti-Indian". These perceptions are completely false, and therefore troops have to be constantly educated on "right" perceptions about the Kashmiri community. Unfortunately, the Army like most conventional armies is attrition-minded and finds adapting to any change very difficult. We have a live problem at our doorsteps, we cannot afford to wait for the Kashmiris to adapt to us. The onus to change Kashmiri perception lies on us. A reasonable man adapts himself to the world around him. An unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself.

Alongside mental preparation, effective steps will be needed to reverse the ill-effects of hostile propaganda and exposing Pakistani shenanigans. Other steps to inform and enlighten the troops will include:

- Educating them comprehensively upon the background of the Kashmiri imbroglio; that it is a political and not a military problem; and therefore militancy is not militarily winnable. Accordingly, the role of the security forces is to bring down violence to manageable levels.
- The objective of the security forces is not to kill although killing may be necessary. The objective

will ultimately always be to win over Kashmiris. As a result, the 'body-count' game is absolutely counter-productive.

- Despite Pakistan's active support and abetting the proxy war, the overwhelming majority of Kashmiris do not want to be part of Pakistan. Pakistan is only an ally in the Kashmiri bid for 'Azadi'.
- The vast majority of militants are Kashmiris, not foreign mercenaries. The latter, about 10 per cent of the overall militant population, have been sent to stiffen the fighting capability of Kashmiri militants and prove to the world that a 'jehad' was being waged.
- That Kashmiris are Sufis and inclined secularists - not fundamentalists.

These are themes for the education of the security forces which must constantly be put across by the officers.

The battle of perceptions does not end here. There are the people's perceptions too about the Government and the security forces that also must be reckoned with. 'People' includes not only the common man but petty government functionaries as well. Take Human Rights for example. Whether the National Human Rights Commission absolves the security forces of certain allegations, or whether the latter punishes offenders, is no solace to the security forces; it is irrelevant. What matters is what the people think, what they perceive to be right or wrong. Human Rights is therefore not a legal but a moral issue, and in the ultimate analysis it is the people's verdict that sticks.

Another popular perception is corruption where the root causes of militancy lie. People attribute rampant corruption to influential officials and politicians working at the behest of the Government of India and going unpunished. They blame the Government because they perceive these corrupt men to be doing their bidding and enjoying their patronage. At the ground level, where developmental projects are not being implemented satisfactorily, people attribute the syphoning-off of money to the nexus between contractors, militants and officials. These perceptions cannot be wished away by denials and debating societies or holding the people equally blameworthy. Perceptions have to be changed by visible change on the ground - change for the good of the people. In this hour of crisis, the way out must lie in resuscitating the Administration and police for good governance, and creating job opportunities for the unemployed literate youth. This should be quickly followed up with a massive economic package and implementation of developmental projects. It is only through effective good governance and distancing ourselves from corrupt politicians that popular perceptions will change. Even impartial investigations into the family and business assets of the corrupt will send favourable signals. The other alternative is atonement.

Although of late there has been a positive improvement in the quality of the J and K Police, there is a widespread belief that the police is dysfunctional, corrupt, inefficient, "Hindustani stooges" and "rented Muslims". Others feel that at the lower level (Station House Officers and below) nearly 20 per cent are pro-militant. The absence of police reforms to improve their habitat and quality of operation, the police mutiny, and Ali Mohammad Dar, a dismissed Assistant Sub Inspector, becoming the military commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, reinforce such beliefs. The police is also associated with corrupt political regimes in the past and is accused of helping in rigging elections.

A weak police force symbolises a weak state, it discredits the fair image of a Government. There is no doubt that a lot needs to be done to make the police an effective force. Training and provision of wherewithal is only a part answer. The need of the hour is to tackle this perception bottoms-up, to uphold the authority of officer in charge of police stations and restore the credibility of the local constable, irrespective of what the cost may be. No counter-militancy strategy can succeed if the local police is demoralised and not propped up and made into an efficient force. Militants will always attempt to divide and attack the conscience keepers of law and order. When they succeed, the fear of the gun pervades; that is what they earnestly want to happen. Why don't we learn from the success story of the Punjab Police?

The credibility of the police will also depend upon the extent to which security forces are seen to be operating within the parameters of law. To operate within the law is to operate with the police -. it is cooperation and not confrontation. The charge that militants do not observe off-side rules does not hold water. Wrongs by the militants cannot justify wrongs by the security forces. The two are in different leagues although the playing ground is the same. It is only when law and order breaks down beyond the capability of the local police that the security forces are called in. Under such circumstances, they have to uphold the law at all costs, however difficult and irksome it may be. Upholding the law means upholding the police.

The story of the police does not finish here. Unless citizens have the security of their lives, they cannot be expected to repose faith in the administration and police forces. Unless the corrupt, the criminal and the militant are caught and charged by the police and put behind the bars, we are back to square one. Therefore, the revival of judiciary system is also a must. An efficient police force needs an effective judiciary.

13

Mental Adaptability

"If future shock were a matter of physical illness alone, it might be easier to prevent and to treat. But future shock attacks the psyche as well".

Alvin Toffler in
Future Shock

Soldiers in all armies have one problem in common, their inability to adapt to change - change in combat milieu, terrain, tactics technology and even people. This is why military ideas take anything upto 40-50 years before fruition. The story of the tank, the helicopter, the aircraft-carrier and the bomb will be familiar to the reader.

Low intensity conflict (LIC) is all about high speed change, chaos and disorder. The only certainity is uncertainty. The soldier's mind is constantly befuddled with fog, "noise" and clutter. Counter-militancy operations are heartbreaking operations. Some 5 per cent success is excellent going, but 5 per cent success is also frustrating and disheartening. This is the mental make-up of a simple soldier with an IQ less than 100. How to operate through this environment, how to operate and re-educate soldiers; these are the challenges of cultural shock in low intensity conflict.

Low intensity conflict demolishes in one stroke all traditional military concepts applicable to general war. The contradictions are simply too many - contradictions which even Marshals and Generals have found difficult to reconcile while seated hundreds of miles away from the battlefront. It is a tall order to expect soldiers to do so in the heat of the moment when their very existence flickers between life and death in a matter of seconds. Critics therefore need to be sympathetic in their criticism.

Soldiers by the very nature of their mental training focus on an 'enemy' who is identifiable. The soldier is trained to hate the enemy, to give him no quarter, to destroy him completely. Greater the hatred, greater the feeling of superiority - superiority of civilisation, of race, of colour, of creed, of ego, of power. The enemy soldier alone is not the target. The state that sustains him, that directs him to discharge its political directions, is also evil - and therefore also an 'enemy'. Since states comprise people, the soldier learns to hate the enemy's people also. Such is the intensity and ferocity of hate - hate that is often blinding. Unless an army can imbibe the feelings of hate and superiority in its soldier and focus these on an identifiable enemy, it cannot hope to win a decisive "victory" in conventional war.

The change in low intensity conflict is startling, in fact melodramatic. There is no enemy! Citizens of one's own country - Kashmiris, even though some have picked up the gun, are not enemies by any stretch of imagination. An estranged or alienated section of population cannot be labelled 'enemy'. To do so, intensifies alienation, brutalises the security forces and encourages the 'body-count' game.

Soldiers go into the battle to accomplish missions, to achieve 'objectives'. These could be the destruction of an enemy or the capture and retention of ground. At the level of soldiers and captains, the levels where battles in low intensity conflict are fought, the objectives are physical. Objectives are all about blood and death - body warfare and not mind warfare.

Killing can never be the aim, although some killing is necessary to bring violence down to manageable levels. Even if every single militant is killed, militancy would still not be resolved. Colonel Harry Summers, Jr, recounts his conversation in Hanoi on 25 April 1975, with the North Vietnamese delegation negotiating the exchange of prisoners of war:

> "You know you never defeated us on the battlefield", said the American Colonel.
>
> The North Vietnamese Colonel pondered this remark a moment, "That may be so", he replied, "but it is also irrelevant".

In the counter-militancy campaign, an army can win all the battles and yet lose the war. This happened in French Indo-China, in Vietnam and in Afghanistan. Under the changed operating milieu, the soldier therefore faces the second contradiction; the objective is psychological - to ultimately win the hearts and minds of the Kashmiris. The soldier's dilemma does not end here. Although his prime objective is psychological, some killing is still required. How and where does he draw the line in moments of stress, particularly when his very life is at stake?

Right from early days, the soldier is trained to the doctrine of the application of maximum and unrestricted 'force'. Force is the application of firepower to destroy the enemy - greater the destruction, better the results and higher the soldier's own chances of survival. Self-preservation is the first law of war. The same soldier now finds it difficult to understand that he has to use minimum force for political considerations. This is the third contradiction.

What is minimum force to a soldier, when the militant uses force for demonstration effect with total disregard for collateral damage? Then there is the inherent frustration of not being able to teach "them" a lesson. Minimum force is not the question of application of firepower. If it was, hypothetically, the soldier would not have any problem. With a little self-control the delivery of lesser quantum of firepower is possible. Minimum force has deeper connotations.

Strategically, the concept of minimum force implies that security forces ought to operate within the "LIC threshold", force just adequate to keep the violence down to acceptable levels. The over-use of heavy weapon systems such as aircrafts, artillery and helicopters would evoke an equally high response by the militants, such as surface-to-air missiles and heavy mortars. When responses from both sides are hyped, the people suffer from the collateral damage that is inevitable. Consequently, the idea of "keeping the pot boiling" but not to let it boil over, is also relevant to the security forces.

Tactically, the principle of minimum force goes well beyond the domain of firepower - an understanding which the soldier is expected to have. It will include:

- The option of using maximum force in minimum time, vis a vis minimum force over maximum time.
- Conduct of 'people-friendly' operations including civic action.
- Use of non-lethal weaponry, a technology that is up and coming.
- Use of special training and specialised equipment to minimise collateral damage e.g. ban on use of incendiary ammunition against houses occupied by militants who refuse to surrender. On exploding, such ammunition invariably causes fires that spreads to neighbouring houses. To kill a rat one does not have to pull the house down.
- Greater involvement of the local police and police methods to deal with situations like crowd control and house searches.
- Operating within the laws of the land even though the general law and order situation has broken down. Having said so at the outset, it is admittedly difficult because the militant will always be operating outside the law. But for how long? His sustenance depends upon the people. As the security forces and police start receiving the respect of the people, the militant starts to lose his hold. By addressing militancy, militants are neutralised axiomatically. The reverse is not true.

- Visible reduction in the high profile presence of security forces. You cannot expect people to love a soldier or the Government if a gun is pointed at them all days, all years. Security forces must therefore learn how to be discreetly present. We therefore need to review the entire concept of setting up bunkers in population centres. Some are required at strategic points, but most can be done away with. They are festering sores and do no good to the image of the Government.

Mental mobility or adaptability is not peculiar to low intensity war, although the requirement is greater here because of the high intensity of non-linearity, because of the overriding political and psychological overtones. What is immediately required are thinking-soldiers. The most difficult job in the world is to put a new idea into an army man's head. Even more difficult is to get the old ideas out. This is the challenge an army faces when it sets out to produce thinking-soldiers.

What are the intellectual challenges facing the soldier of the 21st Century?

Adaptability is the first. In India, three distinct eras are co-existing - the agrarian, the industrial and the information ages. The disparities between them are so wide that adaptation and re-adaptation is not easy. Mental repositioning in even the best of circumstances is easier said than done. The challenges lie in the contradictions :

- Soldiers, 78 per cent of whose homes are in rural areas - still in the agro-industrial age, but are commanded by an urban military elite that belongs to the information age. Of these soldiers who are battling militancy, 70 per cent are below tenth-pass in school; their officers are graduates.

- Agro-industrial age militants who are employing weapons of the information age, i.e., terrorism, propaganda, disinformation and hi-tech random attacks to kill one and scare a million. At the opposite end, military forces of the information age possess a complete range of sophisticated killing machines, but are unable to use this hardware. Their opponents, the militants, concentrate their energies on winning the information war - they use their software effectively.
- The myriad nature of threats places heavy demands on responses. Agrarian and industrial age states are trained in straight forward destruction of 'enemy' forces - a Clausewitzian view. Conversely, militants believe in the tactics of hit and run. Even the nature of threats that armies face is vague. Information age military commanders now have to contend with the shift from wars between nation states to wars vs "informed entities": Somalia-type warlords, terrorism, militancy, foreign mercenaries, ethnic groups warring with each other Karachi-style, and peacekeeping or humanitarian missions.
- While job requirements demand de-centralisation, the free availability of communication systems raises the info-hunger of higher commanders and the civilian administration. This leads to centralisation, over-commanding and the bad habit of back-seat driving.
- Information technology generates a data blitz and over a period develops the penchant (amongst

middle-piece officers mainly) of generating raw bits of information, rather than synthesis and analysis. Except in classic conventional wars which are already on the back-burner of modern history, synthesis is possible provided military officers possess deep knowledge of the non-military aspects of modern conflict. Consequently, when synthesis is either lacking, perfunctory or only military oriented, the information bursts forth in torrents only to clog the decision making cycle.

Military requirements in low intensity conflict are complex, often contradictory, and constantly forcing a soldier's mind to keep re-positioning itself constantly. High levels of psychological pressure and uncertainty further stress his thinking balance. Only an adaptive mind, well versed and informed about all aspects of societal problems, will be able to cope with the challenge.

Situational awareness is the second challenge - acute, because of the high political and psychological content of such internal conflicts. In these scenarios, apart from the problem of synthesis highlighted above, there is also a need for the military to 'manage' (and even control in extreme cases of anarchy) the principal actors in the overall operating environment - Civil Administration, the local police, para military forces, politicians, media and prominent citizens. Situational awareness also takes in the government's resources as well - expanding missions, diminishing budgetary and manpower resources, unstated military compulsions, working ethos, etc. Failure to do so can be frustrating - a case of five-star ambitions with two-star capabilities.

Acquisition of a completely new range of mental skills is the third challenge. In order to absorb and resolve the changing patterns of conflict situations, commanders and intelligence officers will need to widen their reading and equip themselves with psycho-politico-military knowledge as well as manipulative skills. As we progress into the next century, the overtones of the human elements of conflict will continue to rise to unprecedented heights. Behavioural sciences and study of group behaviour should therefore form a part of military curriculum. Although history will help a lot in understanding the behavioural patterns of societies, there will also be a need to predict such patterns for the future. The military cannot afford to neglect history at any cost. What is overdue is a sense of history - to review, and if need be, to re-examine the past and make broad predictions about the future. Sadly, the Indian Army has stopped studying history.

Purging an army of attrition-mindedness is the fourth and probably the most difficult task that lies ahead. Clausewitz's dictum: "war is an instrument of national policy" is fast losing its relevance in a global village. The goal of all wars has always been political, but now it is increasingly more political. This is why there is no military solution to Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir. The unshakable belief in the 'bean-count' game and the absoluteness of firepower and mobility are damaging thoughts.

What should be the New Curriculum?

The first reform should aim at enlarging the scope of the study of history - not just military history but the story of society for whose protection and well being soldiers exist. The importance of studying pure military history was justified in situations wherein the objective of war was the destruction of the enemy - to kill. But the politico-military objectives of modern wars is never to kill; it is to create a stable security environment, it is to win the hearts and minds of the people. As a spin-off, wars must also sustain the commitment of the country's citizens. Barbarossas, Alameins, Yom Kippurs and Gulf Wars, Montgomerys, Pattons and Guderians will not help much. Guerrillas do not read military campaigns and battle accounts; they go about using their common sense. Adversity is their best teacher.

Even the study of military history has to be approached cautiously. In set-piece wars, but more so in operations other than war, where participants and perceptions are myriad, truth becomes the first casualty. All soldiers who have been to war know it. In the words of Lenin: "All truth is partisan". Facts never speak for themselves, they are interpreted by the filters of one's experience and perceptions. Military historical accounts are no different; they too are invariably written from a single man's perspective; often one-sided and based upon events born out of the fog and frictions of war. Even if the story of the other side of the hill is included, that too is one-sided. Moreover, victory teaches very little because nothing succeeds like success. The 1990-91 Gulf War is a case in point. History would have been different had even a few hundred body bags carrying American soldiers been returned from the Desert. When viewed against the background of American sensitivity to casualties - the psychological nightmare of their Vietnam experiences, US pull-out from Somalia on suffering 18 dead and President Bill Clinton calling off ground action after the shooting down of one F16 (June 1995) over Bosnia, the possible outcome of history cannot be ignored. As a result, accounts of military successes do not provide all the answers - even speculative answers. After an event everyone becomes wise, and military commanders with help from historians and media men ascribe all the brilliance to themselves.

In war, as in life, only defeats and reverses bring forth lessons, victory seldom does. To acknowledge defeat and accept the lessons that flow out is a rare attribute of any nation or military. History is replete with examples where historians 'Dunkirked' reverses and portrayed them as sagas of their country's 'finest hour' and military brilliance against overwhelming odds. The reader will recall Tennyson's glorification of the disaster at Balaclava in the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The curriculum of history has to extend well beyond military frontiers. Operations other than wars are conflicts wherein people are centre-stage. As a result, the new curriculum has relevance down to platoon and section commanders. Kashmir is a good example. It is not enough for military commanders to be well versed in counter-insurgency techniques alone or assimilate lessons of the past. These are important but are the easier parts of training. The danger however lies in looking at militancy, a three-dimensional problem, through a key hole - in two dimension: soldier vs militant. To view militancy purely through military lens is fraught with danger. To do so ignores the study of the third dimension - the history of the people; their background, their psyche, their politics and their aspirations.

Military commanders in Kashmir down to corporal will do well to mentally equip themselves (albeit in varying degrees) with knowledge of the following :

- Islamic fundamentalism to include doctrinal and social views; religious practises and institutions such as 'ummah', 'ijma' and 'jehad'; and why Islam rejects the ingredients of modernisation - secularism, democratic liberalism and individualism.
- Ideological beliefs and practises of the Jamaat-e-Islami; a pro-Pakistan party that continues to provide the political fuel for the on-going militancy.
- Cultural heritage of Kashmir, its customs and traditions.
- Psyche of the Kashmiri community - its perceptions and how it has evolved through the centuries and encouraged survival thinking.
- The present political imbroglio, its historical background, legal and ethical dimensions. Politics per se would make little sense unless there is an understanding of possible political scenarios, the reactions of Indians in the rest of the country, the political compulsions of either side and practical options to break the impasse.
- Impact of insurgency on the economy of the state and the true cost of conflict - alienation and brutalisation.
- Theory and history of political violence, its lessons for Kashmir.

- The information war - the historical perspective, psychological vulnerabilities and openness of information. This in outline is a sketch of the 'new-history' curriculum.

This is curriculum-history in its wider sense, not confined to military compartments only. History as a subject for study can never be pure, as there are no clear dividing lines in the chronicles of society; or even individuals. Every neutron of social life - social, economic, political and external is forever colliding. 'New history' for the military therefore takes an expanded view of conflict - more about society and of its people, as opposed to military factors only. This in essence is the theme.

New-history demands an equally new thought process - manoeuvre mindedness. Manoeuvre thinking enables military commanders to impose their will upon militants and win over the hearts and minds of the populace, from whose support the militants draw their strength. Manoeuvre thought processes are stimulated when there is vision, when the overall purpose is well defined and events are seen in their correct socio-political context. By applying military parameters exclusively, vision and purpose are defeated. Unlike the movie director's frame of reference, perspectives are larger pictures - life-sized pictures of events - pictures without frames - pictures which are collages of culture, values, emotions, aspirations and political isms. Military minds that imbibe these perspectives develop a better grasp and understanding as well as intuitive powers and adaptability.

Why are guerrillas difficult to defeat? Apart from a host of other reasons, a guerrilla's understanding of people, politics and psychology is infinitely better than the soldier. This largely explains why despite winning all the battles, the military often loses the war. The lack of political awareness and military insensitivity towards people is responsible for the dehumanisation that usually follows. This mental and emotional void is as a result of the isolation of a soldier - isolation because of faulty education and distancing from the public.

Acquiring intellectual weapons is not an easy exercise. There is one snag; the rub lies in the mind of the military - the fear of history. The new curriculum, the weapon of the intellect, is a re-examination of the past. The military, like all ruling classes, is a power centre. Study of the new curriculum is like studying subversive literature because some of its revelations could lead to the loss of power over historical memories and human consciousness. Nothing can be more painful than the death of one's illusions. This is why the military is afraid of thinking - to think is an agonising experience.

> "When we become depressed at the thought of the enormous power that governments, multinational corporations, armies and police have to control minds, crush dissents, and destroy rebellions, we should consider a phenomenon that I have always found interesting: Those who possess enormous power are surprisingly nervous about their ability to hold on to their power. They react almost hysterically to what seems to be puny and unthreatening signs of opposition..... Is it possible that the people in authority know something that we don't

> know ? Perhaps, they know their ultimate weakness".[26]

The study of history breeds dissent - threat to authority and questioning of accepted political, social and military dogmas. Can the military tolerate this? Can the military loosen its controls over the minds of its soldier? Give them greater freedom to think and act or is the military condemned to perpetuate Orwells' 1984? "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

A lot of history in a wider sense is like censorship - fabrication, massaging truth, controlling ideas and divulging only what is harmless. Dictators like Stalin, Hitler and Mao Tse-tung employed large bureaucracies to conceal the realities of history. These bureaucrats were successful right upto the period of Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika in the mid-80s. A re-examination of the Soviet past was the beginning of the break up of the USSR and the downfall of Gorbachev. Others too have been afraid of history and have deliberately gone about distorting the truth. The reader will also recollect what happened at Tianamen Square in 1989 when Chinese intellectuals demanded the "right to remember" and a "free historical enquiry". Despite all their openness, one third of American history is still classified. In the pre Cold War era, American textbooks standardised the curriculum of history and successfully sold the capitalist swan song - that the world had arrived at the "end of history". The message of capitalism was put across innocuously in school books on arithmetic. Examples of profit and loss, of interest rates and market economy abounded. The reader must now realise the military stakes involved in adopting the new curriculum. The 'newness' of the curriculum is what is important because its usefulness and originality will lie in historical inquisition. Can the military stand up to this inquiry for historial justice?

> "The struggle of man against power, is the struggle of man against forgetting".
>
> "The past is full of life, eager to irritate us, provoke and insult us, tempt us to destroy or repaint it. The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past. They are fighting for access to the laboratories where photographs are retouched and biographies and histories are rewritten."

Milan Kundera,
the Czech noveliest

Battlefields of the future will have a heavy bias towards information and economics, and the weapons to fight them will not be confined to Kalashnikovs, bombs, tanks and warplanes; they will be fought with intellectual weapons as well. Traditional training and educational methods will not help, a new curriculum will be needed; it is long overdue.

Intellectual weapons are weapons of the future. To deny the military their capability is to pre-ordain their defeat and humiliation. Unless the concept of history is expanded and unless the past is carefully and scientifically re-examined (to resurrect knowledge and not condemn the past), the weapons of intellect will remain blunt. This is price the military must pay - the price for a new curriculum if it wants to win people and win wars.

The military must not fear history.

The poignant thoughts of Antonic Gamsci in a letter to his son from a Fascist prison is a thought worth pondering over. There is a message in it for the military.

> "My Darling Delio, I am feeling tired and cannot write a lot. Write to me always and tell me about everything that interests you in school. I think you must like history ... because it deals with man, as many men as possible, all the men in the world in so far as they unite together in society, and work and struggle and make a claim for a better life."

Antonio Gamsci

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14

Victory and the 'Bean-Count' Game

"The solution in Vietnam is more bombs, more shells, more napalm ... till the other side cracks and gives up."

Major General De Puy, one of
America's best generals in Vietnam

In brutal terms, war is Darwinian - the survival of the fittest. For the fit soldier, be it war or be it love, there are no ground rules. Winning is not the important thing, it is everything. In war there are no runners-up and no room for moderation. Winning means living; in order to live the enemy must die. Victory in war is therefore unmistakably total.

Victory in a base sense implies destruction of the adversary and the complete infrastructure that sustains him in battle. To a soldier, victory only means one thing - killing. Likewise, for a soldier the only yardstick of measuring success is numbers killed and real estate acquired. Since ground in low intensity conflict is only a means, what matters is 'kills'.

This Clausewitzian view of war has some relevance in a general war situation where the objective of the military is to destroy the enemy.

> "War is an act of violence carried to its utmost bounds ... In dangerous things such as war, errors made out of kindness are the worst ... let us hear no more about generals who conquer without bloodshed"
>
> Von Clausewitz

There is no such thing as a military victory in low intensity conflict because such conflicts cannot be resolved by military force. Where the overall objective is to win over the hearts and minds of one's own people, victory cannot ever be measured in militants neutralised and weapons captured. An army can kill all the militants and yet lose the war.

By his very upbringing the military man is apolitical. Unless he is a Marxist, to whom revolutionary and counter-revolutionary wars come naturally, he is taught to keep well away from politics. Low intensity wars are political wars - are peoples' wars; they are not military. When soldiers go into these situations and look for military answers, they do so at the cost of alienating the people and strengthening the grip of the militants. On ground, the soldier's apolitical mind is further buttressed by the nature of training he has received over the years. Training for general war is much easier by comparison. Situations are clear cut and very much physical. Militancy is the very opposite - messy, unclear, psychological and non-military, like eating spaghetti with a knife. A tactical victory could become a strategic defeat.

Americans and Russians failed to grasp this basic truth. Their armies possessed the most awesome destructive power that mankind can think of. They fought their wars thousands of miles away from home; their firepower attacked and obliterated people who did not belong to them. American war planes dropped high explosives seven times more than all the explosives used in World War II. General Harkins, a well known American general, epitomised his army's spirit of adventure:

> "We are going to stomp them to death ... I don't know any other way".[27]

But they were defeated - defeated with dishonour. They even lost the love and respect of their own countrymen. They lost because these two great armies, despite their superpower stature and gigantic killing machines, could not grasp one fundamental truth - you cannot rule over a graveyard. You may defeat the body, you cannot destroy the spirit.

Brutalisation is often as a result of a misplaced sense of patriotism - that I, the soldier, am the only true patriot; the rest are 'enemy'. The feeling is heightened by the soldier's sense of sacrifice that he feels he is required to make, which is in sharp contrast to the "bloody civilians".

There is a hairline difference between controlled-violence and brutalisation, between surgery that is selective and random violence that alienates the people. Indulging in the latter is an open acceptance of failure.

> "The reactionaries are dreaming when they try to drown the revolution in blood, they should know they are irrigating it." [28]

Guzman, the leader
of the Shining Path

The world has its advocates of state sponsored terrorism, the like of what Brigadier General Arciniega did in Peru. The Argentinians had even gone to the extent of formalising counter-terror in their military text books. I quote:

> "Man can only be made to see reason through love or terror... (it is) false that force is always irrational... it constitutes the ultimate of reasons, and conforms to reason when it serves to re-establish order when there is no other suitable means... The use of force is similar to how, faced with the damage produced by the violence of a crime, the surgeon has to turn to the violence of the surgical method to avoid a greater malady... subversive violence destroys order, the surgeon's violence restores it."[29]

See what happend to the surgeon's scalpel in Latin America. See what happened to the Russians in Chechnya. The terminal objective in low intensity conflict is people, not militants. People are the centre of gravity.

Killing militants - the physical objective, is purely secondary and supportive. Consequently, military operations in low intensity conflict must never be at the cost of alienating the people. Killing must always be selective and not random.

Why is it that military minds often fail to comprehend this simple truth?

Two explanations stand out.

First, the lack of study of politico-military history. In the Indian Army for example, the study of even military history has been discontinued for some years - how retrogade. When it was in vogue it was purely for the purpose of passing the Staff College Entrance Examination - there was no analysis. Officers read history to pass examinations, not to ponder over the lessons of history. Reading history is the first part. The second step, particularly in internal conflict situations or operations other than war, is not to connect history as the study of military campaigns won or lost. Their relevance is low; you have to read the right type of history. In Kashmir, this would cover the history of the Valley from 4th Century to date - Kashmiri psyche, society, culture and politics. The third step (which is the most difficult) is to be able to draw the right lessons. In the author's experience, the biggest lesson history teaches us is that the military never learns from history. Lessons apart, history does not even lodge in the military mind - to him history is never radioactive. As a result, he is always re-inventing the wheel.

> "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".
>
> George Santayana

Second, the neglect in study of military classics. The Indian military like most militaries has never evinced any interest in the study of classics that encapsulate eternal truths. Soldiering is the profession of arms. Not reading classics or being able to interpret them is like padres who have never read the Bible or mullahs who haven't opened the pages of the Koran. Careerism is responsible for this attitude as it promotes the desire for qualifiication rather than knowledge. Another detracting factor is the low working vocabulary of service officers, it is about 350 in English and even lower in Hindi. As language and thinking are correlated, the study of classics can only be promoted provided the importance of both language and analysis is inculcated.

The neglect to study politico-military history and military classics dehumanises and brutalises a soldier. Since he does not have the experience of the earlier generations of soldiers worldwide to guide him, each soldier in a stress situation does what to him comes naturally - squeeze the trigger and continue to do so to get out of a hot spot. Alienation of the local populace and brutalisation of the security forces are inevitable. Brutalisation may be defined as attitudinal degeneration of common human values which are supplanted by baser urges. These get reflected in various forms:

- Impolite behaviour, high handedness and hostile body language.
- Offences against women, children and the old.
- Ill-treatment of prisoners.
- Uncaring or unhelpful behaviour towards persons in distress.
- Sloppy dress and deportment.

Conflict by nature is brutal and violent, it is never a gentleman's game - no side gives any quarter. A soldier by nature is not brutal, it is the episodic nature of incidence that makes him so. Circumstances and the operating environment conspire to brutalise him. There can be one or several factors - alcohol, isolation, absence of leaders, poor administrative infrastructure, indifference towards the concern of welfare of troops, or negative perceptions about the people.

Debrutalisation of soldiers during operations and even after they return to peace stations merits close attention. In outline this involves the following:

Cause: Soldiers must never be made to feel that killing militants or defending the Valley is their objective. The real estate can never be two square inches between the two eyes or 130 × 40 kilometers of the Valley floor. Their estate extends towards people - winning over an estranged population and in the process restoring normalcy. The cause therefore sets the focus and the pace.

Perceptions: People can be won over by allaying their suspicions and fears about the Government or the security forces. In this game, credibility underscores human relationship. Credibility does have its ups and downs but in the longer run it pays, and therefore hope must never be seen to be in short supply. This will happen provided negative perceptions about the people are consciously overcome. Failure to do so will only increase the period for de-alienation; and hence a long haul.

'Bean-Count' Game: Soldiers are desensitised when they slap-on general war templates on LIC

battlefields. Conventional concepts of enemy, objective, victory and defeat are not only invalid in low intensity conflict, they are fatal. If commanders are not careful on this score, they may inadvertently be institutionalising the 'bean-count' game.

The Time Factor: The Government and the militant operate at two extremes of the time continuum - the former is in a hurry, the latter protracts the struggle to stretch our nerves - the dog and flea analogy. We therefore need to understand the close relationship between space, time and will. We need not be in a hurry, we need not have time templates and tear-away calendars. We too need time to win over people, time to address the key issues that underpin militancy, time to de-alienate. Troops in a hurry take short cuts and short circuit human relationships. This must not be allowed to happen at any cost for time is on our side.

Soldier's Training: A soldier's basic training is designed to breed aggression and violence. In war, all is fair - the ends justify the means. In fighting militancy this mentality must change. The attitude that "it is him or me" will not work. In militancy, if the militant and the people do not survive or get converted, we shall only have the peace of the grave. The days of pure army or pure police responses are over. A soldier's psyche and training will therefore have to be a combination of a policeman (tact, patience and people-orientation) and an armyman (motivation and excellence in operating techniques). This is what one would like to see in the Central Police Forces and the Rashtriya Rifles which have been raised exclusively as a counter-insurgency force. In the age of scientific inquiry and empowerment of the individual, a force being made to do everything without being equipped to do it by organisation and training, is a blue-print for disaster.

Operating Within Law: In today's age, no government or security force can even hope to de-alienate people, if it fails to operate within the laws of the land despite every odd. If expediency becomes the only law, then moral and human issues are put away on the back-burner.

There is a schism between training and education, the two are dissimilar. Training improves and sustains a soldier's conditioned reflexes or 'behavioural conditioning'; it fine tunes operating techniques, employment of weapon systems and aspects of logistics. Training is more about honing skills and techniques, very little of mind training.

'Educative teaching' on the other hand develops a soldier's mental facilities; rather his intellectual prowess. Education is to be seen as complementary to training; not a substitute. It encompasses:

- Understanding the intent of higher commanders - the 'why' of what they have been ordered to do. While everything else in battle changes, the intent remains constant.
- Developing an intellectual perspective in matters that are politico-military in nature like low intensity operations.
- Learning to think critically and analytically.

- Moral courage to dissent without reference to the higher commander, by changing the mission should the ground situation so demand. Dissent, however, must conform to the higher commander's 'intent'.
- Cultural values and traditions cherished by Indian society (including Kashmiri) and the Indian Army.
- Non-military dimensions and linkages of national security.
- Political and psychological overtones of military actions.

Education is not a subject for higher commanders only. In low intensity conflict situations, a common soldier must understand the limits on use of firepower, the importance of upholding Human Rights as well as rights of a citizen and the imperative of winning people over. In fact, the challenge of balancing training and education for a soldier is more difficult than for officers and generals, because it is he who has to bear the brunt in every situation. No military has resolved this dichotomy - Why?

The marginalisation of the services in the national psyche is not a good sign, it is a precursor of mediocrity; and if not attended to, then decadence. The military in such societies lose the intellectual edge - they seek military solutions for political and ethnic problems, they also believe that firepower is the ultimate answer. To a number-oriented general, education has little meaning.

> "Culture is an activity of thought and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction."

Alfred North Whitehead,
An English educationist in 1925.

The modern soldier must have a thorough understanding of his society, of its foundations - spiritual, scientific and ethical. Achievement becomes difficult in a society like ours where the services are no longer drawing the country's best talent. When both clay and the potter are not upto the mark, you can't produce anything worthwhile. In such a scenario, education becomes a grind.

Higher education in civilian universities and military institutions must be restored at all levels. The soldier of the Information Age needs to be educated from Day One. The importance of education in the services is well summed up by Sir Willian Butler:

> "The nation that will insist on drawing a broad line between the fighting man and the thinking man is likely to find its fighting being done by fools and its thinking done by cowards".[30]

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15

Psychological Dimensions of Generalship

There are two critical levels of command - the platoon commander and the General. The latter evolves the strategy and the concept of winning the hearts and minds battle; the platoon commander executes it. An army wins or loses at these two critical levels. Platoon commanders may win all the battles, but Generals may lose the war for them.

Generalship is often compounded by the absence of a clear cut militancy doctrine. While at the tactical level armies have refined their operating techniques, at the strategic level particularly, there are clashing views on basic issues. Are the nation's armed forces responsible only for external aggression or should they also be prepared to redress an adverse situation arising out of internal threats? Second, once the Army steps in what ought to be the command and control structure at the operational level, vis-a-vis the State, the para military forces and Central Police Organisations? Third, will the Army field force commanders be accountable to the State Governor, the Chief Minister or the Army Headquarters?

There are no clear cut answers, and this complicates the General's professional dilemmas. There are no eternals in counter insurgency. Every insurgency is different; the only constant is the human mind - a mind that is fickle as the summer winds and as unpredictable as a woman. To win therefore, Generals must be endowed with intellectual weapons and mental prowess quite different to the demands of a conventional battlefield.

An army can win all the tactical battles, it can kill every single militant, and yet lose the war strategically. This is what happened in Vietnam and Afghanistan. The higher commander's focus must therefore always be to win the strategic battle. What are the impediments in attaining this vision? The greatest is the fatal attraction of the 'Bean-Count' or 'Number-Game'; to judge success or failure by numbers killed, by weapons captured. Second, there is generally a lack of understanding of the political object that ultimately determines the military objective and the amount of force required. Since the objective is to win over people and bring down violence to manageable levels, military operations are unavoidable. Now comes the slippery ground. Militants are expected to fight with no ground rules. But the same logic does not apply to the security forces; they must operate within the law, never above. And finally, the General's vision will be clouded if the Army is over exposed. Counter-insurgency warfare is a dirty war and it is vital that the Army maintains a discreet presence (as in Punjab), especially in high visibility areas such as towns and cities. By the same token, the responsibility for clearing militants from shrines and places of worship, should be left to police forces. Under no circumstances must the fair image of the Army be stained. When that happens strategic battles become an up hill task and vision is lost.

Generalship therefore requires strategic vision without being deterred by temporary set-backs and the fear that time is running out. The General's time-clock therefore cannot be set for 24 months or three years, his time horizon has to be much more. When military vision is lacking, those most affected are the people. As Proverb 24:18 in the Bible goes:

> "When there is no vision the people perish."

There are no quick-fix solutions in militancy either for soldiers, for government or the militants; the conflict is always protracted. 'Protracted war' is the favourite strategy of all militants. Militancies are long hauls, roller-coasting over the peaks and trough of history, experiencing sometimes pains, sometimes pleasure. Patience is therefore a virtue, a by-product of mental robustness.

Counter-insurgency operations by their very nature are frustrating and heart breaking; about 10 per cent success should be considered as outstanding. The insurgency battleground is not a level ground, it has too many ups and downs and then there are no rules of the game either. Being people-oriented, one man's logic is not the other side's logic. Ethical and intra-organisational tensions and set-backs arise mainly because of Human Rights violations and operations perceived to be anti-people. The cumulative effects can be debilitating. Commanders must therefore have the robustness and mental ability to absorb temporary reverses and be inure to disappointment.

Waging war against militants taxes one's patience to its outer limits. Mental burn outs are not uncommon; their onset slowly and painfully erodes the mental steadfastness of commanders. If unchecked and exposed to prolonged 'soft-kill', the victim may succumb to fatigue.

Fatigue to a General is at odds to what a platoon commander suffers. The reasons too are divergent:

- Unlike General War, there are no tactical and logistic pauses - no time-outs or half-times. The demands on the ground are simply unending.
- There is often mounting frustration when no headway is being made; that an impasse has been reached. And the military man wants quick answers.
- Counter-insurgency operations is a two-front war - one external with the militant; the other internal, your own System.
- In a centralised method of warfare the higher commander's orders and intent get through to the junior-most ranks very swiftly. Counter-insurgency on the other hand is completely decentralised - it takes time for the spirit of the orders, the intent to reach subordinate commanders. If they get the intent wrong, the damage can be incalculable.
- Ethical cross-fire is a common phenomenon in the

life of a General. What is moral, what is immoral; in the killing fields of Kashmir, the dividing lines are blurred. This is why Generals need strong staying power.

Mental mobility is the ability of the mind to adapt to change and operate through chaos and uncertainty. LIC contains high levels of uncertainty, even more than armoured warfare. Change, chaos and uncertainty are its most natural elements. Change is myriad; in terrain, in operational milieu, in engagement rules, in situations, in military tactics and in public mood. Mental mobility is a weak area in our command system and this is why we lack adaptability. Commanders need to train themselves to acquire the ability to operate in an environment of uncertainty, lack of information, lack of political directions and a higher Headquarters whose perceptions are at cross-purposes.

LIC operations are not enemy-oriented; they are people-oriented. People are driven more by emotion and perceptions rather than cold logic. The problem is further aggravated by the mutual biases and varying ethos that exist between the Army and the Rest.

Managing the environment is certainly not a PR exercise, but implies doing away with friction and distrust between all the agencies involved, and attempting to synergise everyone's energy towards a common goal. For the General this is absolutely vital because LIC is not a military problem, it is not a one man show. If the environment is not managed, even tactical victories can be made to appear as strategic failures. As a result, managing and shaping the environment bestows the following advantages :

- Provides focus and synergy and prevents the Army from going it alone.
- Enables non-military support for successful conduct of operations and vice versa.
- Projects the Army in the correct light to the Nation.
- Helps in winning the information war.
- Is able to win the hearts and minds of the Civil Administration, the Police and influential citizens.
- Smoothens over traditional differences and de-frictionises the working environment. This helps in encouraging cooperation amongst various agencies.

Managing is no easy task. Concepts such as 'integrated approach' and 'unity' are not easy to implement. There are other problems too; the perceptions of higher military headquarters, a laid-back local government, back-seat driving by the Administration and a large number of other players. The players include people, politicians, civil administration, civil intelligence agencies, central police forces Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs, National Media, local press particularly, diplomatic corps and self-styled region experts. Managing means a lot of give and take, tactical and mature handling of delicate situations, steering events in the general desired political direction, giving a patient hearing to the other man's point of view, and above all, suppressing king-size egos. Managing also means temporary compromises for the sake of the overall goal.

Military capabilities must be applied prudently - with restraint. Rules of engagement and employment of weapon systems need careful attention. The endeavour must be to keep violence under manageable levels, within the LIC threshold and not allow the pot to boil over. The over-use of helicopters and artillery for example would evoke an equally high level response by the militants - the introduction of Stingers and medium mortars or such like heavy weapons. In addition, the employment of such heavy weapons would inevitably alienate the people apart from escalating the conflict.

In LIC, especially in a modern context, the principle of Unity of Command is not easily achieved and concepts such as 'integrated approach' may be alien to national ethos. There are no military solutions to militancy; in fact, the military effort is proportionately far less than the political and socio-economic package. The answer lies in 'cooperation' or Unity of Effort; that is the name of the game. Cooperation means accommodating other's views, personal rapport to be able to manage the environment, boosting the morale of the civil administration, 'piggy-backing' them when required, kick-starting the police when necessary and avoiding mutual criticism. Unity of Effort is not confined to the Army and other civil agencies only; it also concerns relations between the various headquarters - from Brigade to Army Headquarters. The problem in LIC is often the problem of clashing beliefs between those in the field and those in distant headquarters. It is only through cooperation that reconciliation is possible.

There has been a lot of unjustified criticism of the Unified Headquarters in Srinagar. The concept was conceived sometime in May 1993 and is structured essentially as a coordinating agency; it has no command functions. There have been aberrations (primarily because of the inter-play of some personalities), but the overall concept is sound. Flowing out from the principle of Unity of Effort, the Unified Headquarters is serving a useful purpose of providing a common meeting point for exchange of information; coordination in intelligence sharing; guidelines for crisis management like Hazratbal, and the Al-Faran hostage taking; and Civil Administration support to security force operations such as protection of vulnerable points and vulnerable area, funds for civic action, rehabilitation of surrenderees, investigation of complaints and grievances and cases of violation of Human Rights and compensation to victims.

While battalions kill the militants, Generals must get on with the mission of winning the information war. In no other conflict is the principle of information so paramount. The information age merely accentuates its ,over-riding importance. LICs are people-oriented conflicts with high political and psychological overtones. In a wider sense, information encompasses the public's right to know, openness in sharing information in real-time (as long as it does not jeopardise security), cooperation with the media; psychological warfare and proactive campaigning to win over the people in the rest of the country.

In the information age where knowledge is power, we are being confronted by third wave warfare. The use of intellectual weapons is replacing military weapon systems. In fact, cyber war techniques are in an advanced stage of development. LIC is a people's war and therefore it is a total war. It is not a war of material, it is a war between human beings. Consequently, a General cannot hope to achieve the overall goals of helping in restoring the socio-political goals, if he loses the information war. Winning the information war is not restricted to media only, it encompasses much more. The information war includes:

- Obtaining real-time actionable intelligence.
- Psychologicl operations not only to win the population and isolate the militants, but to convince the soldier of the just and legitimate cause he is fighting for. Modern soldiers cannot be taken for granted on this account. Generals do it at their peril.
- Transparency in exchange of information.
- Close interaction and cooperation with the media.
- Protecting own forces against hostile propaganda by militants and unfriendly countries.

This is what generalship is all about; not to meddle in small scale operations but to lean back and take a wide angled and distant view of the ground and political situation. While doing so, he must continuously keep on sharing his intent with subordinate commanders, fighting the information war and managing the environment.

16

The Soldier

The most strategic resource that India has in Kashmir is the young officer and 'Jawan' of the Indian Army (hereafter referred to as the Soldier). He is facing the brunt of the bullets and the wrath of the militants in an environment that is at odds with nature and politics. If casualties are an indicator of morale, guts and front-line leadership, then the soldiers pass the test with distinction. An officer casualty bill of 6.72 per cent (as 2 per cent of the forces in the Valley), speaks volumes for what the Army stands for - duty, honour and country.

The story of the Indian soldier in Kashmir is a case study for other armies who faced similar challenges but failed. In recent memory two superpowers have fought vicious counter-insurgency campaigns. They had everything that country and technology could provide - money, promotion, habitat, firepower, mobility and protection. To crack a nut they used a sledge-hammer. Yet, they lost to people who fought back with nothing but their human spirit - for whom hope and courage was always in great abundance. Despite Afghanistan and 80 years of 'dialectic materialism', the Russians have not learnt enough from history. They went into Chechnya, an army unprepared for an irregular war against their own people - an army trying to fight insurgency by World War II techniques.

The lessons are clear.

First, an army can have the best of everything and yet lose the war. On the other hand, an army can have very little and still win the war, since the outcome of 'Small War' depends more on the human spirit and less on technology. There are no technological solutions for peoples' problems.

Second, an army reflects the values of its society, the two are inseparable. When military values are degraded upon the battlefield, it is a signal that the values of its society have started to decay.

What can other nations learn from Kashmir?

The Indian soldier draws his strength and commitment from the oldest surviving civilization of mankind - the Indian Civilization. Civilization imbibes values, traditions, culture, heritage, honour and the will to triumph over evil and adversity. Civilization provides the sense of being protected from danger, fear and setbacks by imbibing citizens with the feeling of value judgement and collectivism - the coming of togetherness and cohesion of large groups. Civilization also allots private space for people to retire and reflect, as well as provide an impetus for imagination and creativity. It is civilizational strength which sustains the soldier in the mountains and paddy fields of Kashmir. In the manner that Indian Civilization withstood the peaks and troughs of history and assimilated other religions and cultures that came to India, the Indian has an indefatigable capacity to cope with suffering (fatalistically) - what will be, will be.

Culture is difficult to define. One has to live through it - to experience it, to be able to understand its full meaning. Culture can be understood by defining its conditions. In the words of Swami Chinmayanandji, an Indian philosopher; the conditions are: "a people, living in the same geographical area for a long period of time, living and respecting the fundamental values of life". This is why nomads never develop a culture of their own.

Indian culture, with its infinite diversity, cannot correctly said to be enshrined in any one book or collection of books. It is a culture of accommodation and heterogeneity. Three values stand out, values that give unlimited strength to the Soldier - readiness to sacrifice ('tyag') to keep intact the totality of our values; 'brahmacharya' or self control and discipline, the saying of "No" to sensual pleasures beyond a certain point; and 'Satyam', which implies being honest to one's conviction irrespective of the consequences. 'Satyam' is all about moral courage, intellectual conviction and commitment. The three values identified are not unique to any particular religion. All Indian soldiers, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, or any other, draw similar inspiration from their own religions. Fortunately for India, it is the prevailing ethos of religiousity that makes unselfishness, discipline and sacrifice possible even in this material age.

Another notable feature of civilizational strength is the sense of time. An Indian is never in a hurry, he is in no search for quick-fix solutions either. Occidental science expresses two views on Time. The biological and evolutionary explanation regards the Universe evolving from simple to complex structures - from lower to higher life. The second viewpoint is based upon the Laws of Thermodynamics. According to these laws, there is an inescapable loss of energy in the Universe and this is why the world moves from order to disorder. Consequently, since time has a directionality about itself like ageing, it is irreversible.

To an Indian, the past, the present and the future are frozen into one time - Time is Zero. The world behaves in accordance with certain predetermined laws and is therefore reversible. This explains why the cyclic theory of Time has a distant horizon. Whereas Western yardsticks of time are finite, to an Indian politician or soldier there is no undue urgency. Strategists need to understand time horizons, particularly in the context of internal armed conflicts - that time horizons are influenced by the mental clock of a society, not the ambitious time plots of military commanders. In Kashmir, for example, where the destiny of 4.5 million people is involved, where the populace has been alienated over five decades, the hearts and minds battle cannot be won on a time bound programme. Materials can be orchestrated, but distraught minds take a long time to heal. Politically and militarily this means that counter-militancy is going to be a long drag. As long as the soldier understands this, he will not brutalise, but remain patient, a virtue in low intensity conflict. Brutalisation and alienation occur when soldiers and politicians short circuit the cycle of time.

The militant's strategy is to protract the war - "death by a thousand cuts". What should be the nation's response to protracted war?

The answer is to "protract it".

The military, the militant and the politicians are all operating in different time zones. Each has its own body clock. Within the military community, the attritionists, and they constitute a comfortable majority, look at time through a loop-hole - in two dimensions. On the other hand, manoeuvrists as well as militants look at time three dimensionally. This is the time dilemma soldiers are entrapped in. The military clock is everything about precision and punctuality. Military life, in peace as well as in war, is governed by the exactness of time. The essence of coordination of the 'master plan' also revolves around time, so does all battle planning. In fact, everything in the military from entry to retirement is time bound. Time virtually governs the military mind.

The politician too is running against the clock. His need is his vote banks, who shall be demanding many answers at the next round of elections. All the ills and problems the politician begets and inherits must therefore be resolved before he goes in for the next electoral round. How long or short this time is going to be will be decided by the vote banks.

Modern conventional wars between nation states too are limited - they are short and swift. In a uni-polar world particularly, anything beyond a few weeks can be economically and psychologically crippling, especially if the warring sides are key players in the economic global market. Body-sharing and burden-sharing are not open ended; there is a heavy price to be paid. The price is money and the price is time.

The military man, because of the nature of his training, is caught up in a time wrap. Irrespective of the nature of conflict, conventional or unconventional, he is in a great hurry to get over with it. To do so is a recipe for failure; in such engagements there are no military solutions. Whereas weapon systems can be concentrated at the point of criticality in a specified time, the same principles do not apply when dealing with the destiny of people.

Traumatised minds take a long time to heal. For example, in a counter-revolutionary war situation, even if it was possible to kill every single militant (in theory) the military mind would believe that ipso facto militancy would be stamped out. Such belief exposes a complete lack of political astuteness, knowledge of history and human nature. Even the old Duke of Wellington was of the view that most militaries, because of their macho outlook towards life, usually find it difficult to continue a protracted war. "A great country cannot wage a little war", he once said:

> "There comes a time in every battle - in every war - when both sides become discouraged by the seemingly endless requirement for more effort, more resources and more faith. At this point the side which presses on with renewed vigour is the one to win".

Westmoreland; *A Soldier Reports*

Militancy places a psychological weight on the military mind and undoubtedly it is a heavy cross to carry. Counter-militancy operations by their nature are uphill and heartbreaking, and it is very difficult to know whether one is winning or losing. More often than not, one is running all the time to only find that one is standing in the same place. The "battlefield" appears to be frozen in time and the levels of uncertainty and friction can become intolerable. There comes a stage when the mind is tempted to throw in the towel, to get over with the limbo as quickly as possible. With impressive statistics of body-counts as a psychological crutch, the mind hopes to find a way out - an escape from the real world, where only the fittest survive and win.

In mobile war, where manoeuvre aims at dominating the opponent's mind or in winning over the population, the timing has got to be perfect. Herein lies the art of generalship. While in a tank battle, timing will depend upon which side seizes the initiative first, in low intensity conflict, patience is the virtue. Militant tactics are the tactics of the weak - to protract the war, thereby to wear down the political and military will of the nation, gain time and space for political mobilisation or ideological remoulding (as in Kashmir), win the information war and reverse the balance of forces. If the tactics succeed, the government either walks out or is forced to make political concessions. Timing also poses a challenge to guerrillas. A guerrilla movement is divided into certain phases. Although blurred and overlapping, the timings for shifting gears has got to be right - from political mobilisation to civil disobedience; from 'controlled' terrorism to open armed action; and finally full scale conventional war.

Getting the timing right will depend upon a correct assessment of the ground situation, the people's mood, terrain and international support. Misjudging any one factor can be an irreversible slide-back like what has currently happened to the LTTE in Sri Lanka. They came out from their jungles prematurely to take on the Sri Lankan Army in open battle.

What is therefore the counter strategy to protracted war?

1. Avoid fighting the 'numbers' game; it brutalises soldiers and alienates people.
2. Capture the mental space since it is a precondition for manoeuvre. Fight militancy psycho-socially by weakening militants mentally and isolating them from the population. To do so, people must be weaned away from the militants. The focus of attention must therefore be the people and not the militant. If the people are won over, the war is won; if the people are not won over, the war is lost. The centre of gravity must therefore be the people.
3. Patience is the virtue; haste is the enemy of success. Politicians will pressurise the military for quick, high visibility results; they will also ask scores of embarrassing questions. The media will coerce too, so will international opinion and Human Rights activists. Resist them.
4. Mental conditioning, adaptability and the ability to adjust to uncertainty, and absorb setbacks and frustrations induced by endless number of operations, which usually yield little or nothing.
5. At the operational level of war, i.e., corps and above, military commanders are obliged to

spend more time on the socio-politico aspects of conflict, and let brigade and battalion commanders get on with tactical operation. Pareto's 80:20 Principle is a good guide to go by. In reality this seldom happens.

6. Concentrate on winning the information war from the tactical to the strategic level.
7. Aim to fight for time rather than space; time to de-alienate people and win their support.

The soldier's second strength is patriotism, which in the context of globalisation, transnationalism and economic blocs sounds old fashioned these days. Patriotism is under threat from individualism - "I come first, my country later"; it is also under severe attack by market forces - "what matters is money, my profit; morals be damned."

Despite India's wide disparities in class, religion and wealth, patriotism remains a core value of the Indian society. In turn, it procreates the military values of duty, honour and country. Military values decline when social values are eroded. The values of American soldiers in Vietnam and Russians in Afghanistan and Chechnya were the values of their society. When their soldiers returned from the killing fields, the people distanced themselves; in fact, looked upon them with disdain. This was the natural reaction of a society that realised it had got its values wrong. It took a Vietnam and an Afghanistan to arouse this consciousness. So the ire directed at the soldier was actually anger at oneself, the trip wire that actuated the self-cleansing mechanism of American and Russian societies. In Russia, the progress of self-aggrandisement is painfully slow; they have yet to learn from history.

Russians in Chechnya need to read their Solzhenitsyn again: "We must not hide behind fate's petticoats."

The British-inherited Regimental System is the backbone of the Indian Army, a wellspring of robustness and steadiness that the soldier displays in dealing with the Kashmiris and fighting the militants. This is the next strength. The Regiment is the rallying point, the ideological spark that drives one to self discipline, develops cohesion and encourages self-sacrifice. The regimental spirit rallies the soldier around the flag, the buddy and the Regiment's honour. The Indian soldier lives for the Regiment and dies for it. There is no other reason why 59,400 Indian soldiers of the British Empire died in distant lands in the Great Wars, why another 1,34,000 were injured and maimed, why 47 Victoria Crosses decorated their chests. They did all this and more, not for the Union Jack, but for the Regiment.

In sharp contrast, the conscript system of fighting guerrillas and militants has turned out to be a dismal failure. Draft-dodging has become synonym with Vietnam. Even President Clinton was accused of this by the Republicans during the run up to the Presidency. The malaise continues in Russia today. During 1995, only two-fifths of Russians who were called up reported for duty. At the start of the Chechnya conflict, the Russian Army was under-strength by a quarter of a million soldiers. As compared to any volunteer army, conscripts are poorer in quality and therefore low on thinking skills. In this new age of technology and excellence, the need is for highly skilled volunteer forces. The best in any society seldom enlist. However, although regular armies receive their share from the lowest level too, military training over the period overcomes these deficiencies.

A conscript army makes up inadequacy by numbers and firepower, which inevitably results in adopting conventional warfare tactics and widespread collateral damage including civilian lives. Conscripts make up for quality by killings - the 'bean-count' game. It was said in Vietnam that as long as the man was dead and he was Vietnamese, he was a Viet Cong.

At the end of every insurgency and peoples' war, from China to Vietnam to Afghanistan, author after author has written about the 'cause' - the objective for an army. Academically these writers may be correct, but intellectually they are wide off the mark. A cause does not have to be a written slip of paper handed over to a soldier, a marriage certificate or court affidavit to prove the leader's intent and sincerity. These scraps of paper are quite useless because soldiers are earthy; they do not understand isms and they relate to everything in military terms. Even Soviet soldiers who belonged to Marxist regime and were subjected to 70 years of political indoctrination by commissars, could not understand why they were in Afghanistan or why they were in Chechnya. Where was Chinese political motivation when the Vietnamese tamed the yellow Dragon in 1974? This is not surprising because unlike guerrillas, soldiers are not political animals.

The army belongs to the people, never to a government; accordingly, the army is answerable to the people. Following on from this logic, the commitment of an army lasts as long as the commitment of the people lasts. The commitment of the nation is therefore the cause. This is what is sustaining the morale and determination of the soldier in Kashmir - this is his raison d'etre. This is the fourth strength:

> "I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country".
>
> EM Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy,* 1951

Nations and armies seek excellence. So must the Indian Army in Kashmir.

The present tour of duty in Kashmir lasts three years. When compared to a maximum of one year's service for soldiers in Vietnam and 10 months in Afghanistan, it is unfair by all accounts. Long tenures produce combat fatigue and an early 'burn out'. The demotivating killers are uncertainty and continuous operations. With about 265 days of hands-on service in one calendar year, troops are known to average about 16 hours a day in active operations with five hours of sleep and one off-day in 11 days. By any calculation this is mentally and physically stressful. When accompanied by an indifferent habitat (especially during winters), under-strength companies, anxiety and common frustrations, the cumulative effects can be debilitating. If this be the ambience, there is every danger that killing may become Objective Number 1, with winning the hearts and minds battle being relegated to Objective Number 2. When killing becomes the 'success' factor, killing also becomes the main motivation - more the kills, more the motivation.

The first six months for a unit in a counter-insurgency area are critical - anxiety levels are highest, so are casualties to own troops and aberrations in Human Rights. The next critical point on the tenure path is after 24 months. The cycle is repeated - maximum boredom, maximum casualties and allegation of excesses. Even stress related disorders, which account for about 20 per cent of all types of sickness, peak at the two-year mark. Between these two points of reference, motivation is highest at the mid point - that is at 12 months; thereafter it plateaus off only to wane away after some time. For optimum efficiency, the tour of duty of a unit should be pegged at 18 months, the rationale being: four months to orientate, settle down and set up an effective intelligence network; another 12 months to peak and level off; and the last two months to brief and 'blood' the relieving unit.

Another area for attention is better mental care for troops. Somehow 'psychiatric' treatment has acquired a dirty label and stigmatises an individual. We must move away from this thinking. Troops who operate for protracted periods under stressful conditions are bound to suffer from psychological problems as well as disorders. This is very natural and therefore there is no need to look upon psychiatric problems with alarm and hide them in the closet.

Combat stress in low intensity conflict, because of higher levels of uncertainty and loneliness, is more incapacitating than in general war. Although induced in homeopathic doses, stress is spread over a long period. Low intensity conflicts are a campaign of nerves, less military and more psychological, with soldiers inevitably fighting with hands-behind-the back constraints. The mental strain of having to fight one's own people is infinitely greater than fighting the 'enemy'. Environmental stressors which adversely affect a soldier's operating efficiency in low intensity conflict are :

- Extended tenures beyond 18 months accentuate the loneliness, monotony and uncertainty of a soldier's life. He finds uncertainty in almost everything — the very purpose of life, of living, dying or being maimed; the lack of information; the next contact with militant; of what tomorrow holds for him; the duration of their deployment in a given situation; his role; his success.
- Dilemma in being able to resolve the contradictions between general war and low intensity conflict - particularly the concepts of 'enemy', 'objective' and 'minimum force'. Moreover, there are no clear cut victories like in set-piece wars. This is not a war against an enemy and therefore casualties are difficult to accept. As casualties occur over a protracted period, their impact is greater.
- The social, moral and ideological values that a soldier is brought up in are often at cross-purposes with those on an unconventional battlefield (never a level playing ground). Whereas in general war the nation looks upon the soldier as a saviour, out here he is at the receiving end of public hostility. Unable to understand these conflicting reactions, the soldier is desensitised.
- Hostile vernacular Press that keeps badgering away at the security forces, projecting them as perpetuators of oppression. One paper described the soldiers of an Assam Rifle battalion as 'cannibals'.

- Continuous operations affect rest, sleep and body clocks, leading to mental and physical exhaustion. Monotony, the lure of the 'number-game' and low manning strength of units, leads to over-use and fast burn-outs.
- The threshold level of absorbing own casualties varies from unit to unit, depending upon the background of the troops. Paradoxically, the pressure on troops is always to suffer less casualties and achieve more. There is a linkage between casualties and efficiency, between militants killed, recoveries made and own casualties - more the casualties less the results (See Figure 1 below). The dichotomy the soldier faces is straight. "We want results but we do not want casualties".

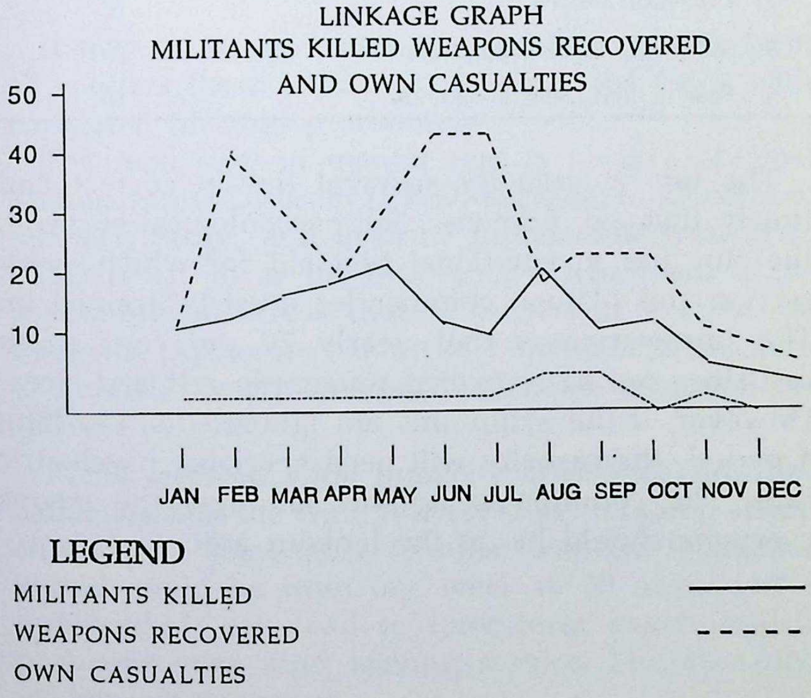
LINKAGE GRAPH
MILITANTS KILLED WEAPONS RECOVERED
AND OWN CASUALTIES

FIGURE 1. Linkage between kills and recoveries of a brigade in 1994.

- High frustration levels because of:
  - Ambiguity regarding success - are we moving forward or standing-still.
  - Lack of kills and recoveries for a long time.
  - Apprehension regarding over-reaction that could result in a human rights violations.

Stressful events and conditions which are experienced most often :

	Weightage %
1. No information	85
2. Separation from family	75
3. Monotony and boredom	70
4. Uncertain results	70
5. Indifferent habitat conditions	65
6. Fear of becoming a casualty	60

The key in casualty survival lies in correct and timely first aid. Likewise, for psychological survival, the clue lies in emotional first aid for which every section and platoon commander must be trained in. The implication is that nearly 70 per cent stress casualties can be recovered by simply rest and sleep. However, if the symptoms are ignored for too long a period, the casualty will need specialist psychiatric care. The common symptoms amongst the troops everyone should be on the lookout are:

	Indicators	Likelihood (%)
1.	Tiredness	100
2.	Nervousness and tension	95
3.	Sleep disturbance	95
4.	Hyper-arousal	90
5.	Anger and irritability	88
6.	General loss of interest in tasks assigned	70
7.	Disobedience or hesitation to act on orders	65
8.	Feeling of being victimised	62
9.	Loss of appetite	60
10.	Pessimism and sense of helplessness	55
11.	Disorientation whenever faced with a changed situation	45
12.	Sluggish response to orders or situation	42
13.	Urge for alcohol	35

It may be a good idea to print and distribute to all soldiers these indicators on laminated cards with emotional first aid procedures.

The next step in mental care is to take on Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD) head-on; to detect it in the early stages and institute professional treatment. PTSD is as old as the history of warfare and is the psychological stress that is caused as a result of traumatic experience - an act of violence or even injury to oneself. Nearly one-fourth of those wounded are afflicted by PTSD.

PTSD received wide publicity after Vietnam, then Falklands and the Gulf War (1990-91). Trauma affects all soldiers - some more, to others less. The incubation period could be from one week to 30 days, and if unattended, can lead to long term psychological problems even after leaving service. The statistical evidence is staggering.

Threat	Total Percentage Psychological Casualties	PTSD %
1. World War II (Far East)	82	28.00
2. World War II (NW Europe)	60	11.00
3. Korea	73	47.00
4. Vietnam	NK	33.5 (110,000 committed suicide).
5. Northern Ireland	50 soldiers per unit per tour of duty which lasted 6 months.	140 per year.
6. Falkland	NK	22.00
7. Kashmir (Includes BSF)	15	7.00

The low PTSD rate experienced by the security forces in Kashmir is a testimony to high quality leadership, sound training and the inherent resilience of the 'Jawan'. However, this should not deter psychiatric advice, monitoring and care for improvement. Stress casualties must be considered as recoverable manpower and therefore a command responsibility. For early detection and treatment, the principles of proximity, immediacy and expectancy demand that casualties are treated close to their units. The further a casualty travels, the lesser likelihood there is of his early return to the unit. Accordingly, there is a requirement to provide each brigade in the Valley with an Emotional Support Team manned by a team of psychiatrist, psychologist and trained psychiatric nursing assistant.

We do not want any wars but it will be naive to think that the days of conflict are over. Even if all the guns were taken away, men will continue to fight each other.

The Indian soldier has stood the test of time, and above all, has amply demonstrated that given a just cause, the right motive and dynamic leadership, he will never let the nation down. The story of the Indian soldier is the story of war - a study in professionalism, character and courage.

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Born in Calcutta on 1st January 1944 and growing up in the Pink City of Jaipur, Arjun Ray graduated from the Staff College at Camberley in UK and did the Higher Command at National Defence College. He served as the Brigadier General Staff of 15 Corps, responsible for conducting anti-militancy operations in Kashmir.

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